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AN
EIGHT-HOURS
DAY.

THE CASE AGAINST
TRADE-UNION AND LEGISLATIVE
INTERFERENCE.

BY
W. J. SHAXBY.



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AN EIGHT-HOURS DAY.

THE CASE AGAINST TRADE-UNION AND LEGISLATIVE
INTERFERENCE.

BY

W. J. SHAXBY,

*Author of "The Case Against Picketing" and "A Summary of
English Legislation on Arbitration and Conciliation."*



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PREFACE.

THE cordial reception given to my little book on "Picketing" in September last has induced the compilation of this summary of a still more important phase of the labour question. The present volume is really a series of notes, so placed as to form, it is hoped, a readable handbook, and drawn up chiefly with the desire of deliberately giving a definite expression of opinion on the subject, but, at the same time, not excluding fair statements of arguments of other sides of the question. It is hoped that the undercurrent of bias bears with it a clear indication that we favour such a voluntary reduction of the hours of labour as considerations for national prosperity and the welfare of every individual concerned will permit; in fact, as Professor Marshall puts it, "that a general reduction of the hours of labour is likely to cause a little net national loss and much moral good." But State interference and trade-union compulsion cannot be too strongly condemned. There is no lack of illustration to show that hitherto voluntary effort has been thoroughly satisfactory. Many experiments have been attempted, either through the personal feeling, the generosity, the sense of duty, or the business interest of the employer, or at the honourable initiative of the employed to secure for themselves more leisure, more healthy conditions of working, or higher wages. If the experiment has failed, State action cannot

compel success. If the experiment has succeeded, State action is not necessary.

That a general reduction of hours of labour will some day be possible is not questioned. The legitimate effort of trade unions towards securing such an end is commendable ; but a clear distinction must be drawn between lawful (using the word in a moral as broader than a legal sense) effort and immoral compulsion or intolerant interference. Peaceful negotiation will solve more difficulties than will recklessly promoted strikes and internecine warfare.

I believe that, with the exception of Mr. Jeans' recent pamphlet, this is the first attempt to summarize in book form the question of an eight-hours day, with the rights of employers and of the unfettered workmen placed prominently in the foreground. Most of the literature professing to deal more or less exhaustively with the subject seems to have unduly emphasized the sentimental and socialistic view of the question at the expense of practical utility.

We all, whether employers or not, rejoice in the fact that the manual worker has during recent years raised himself to a better social position. He has often been righteously discontented, and moderate discontent, containing all the best elements of ambition, is a good thing ; but, carried to excess, it becomes greed, and inevitably tends to an embittered strife. If a workman is paid—and ungrudgingly paid—higher wages, and if he is given—and willingly given—shorter hours, good and faithful service is expected in return, and employers must insist on his throwing off the incubus of supporting the motley agitator, whose business it is to encourage unwholesome discontent and make strife chronic in the industrial world. If the employers continue to act firmly, with wisdom, and in concert, the State will not be likely to bother itself with labour legislation, *but will attend to its functional concerns and ceremonials.*

The only unemployed will then be the self-appointed leaders of that socialist faction which, in the labour world, makes so much noise with so little impression or real achievement.

What I propose to give in this series of notes is (1) a brief summary of a few of the main arguments for and against restrictive legislation as regards the hours of labour; (2) a short analytical statement of some of the possible and probable effects of an eight-hours day from social, economic, and statistical standpoints; (3) a glance at the working of some typical tentative experiments in this direction—although no investigation into conditions of success or causes of failure has been attempted; (4) a *résumé* of proposals which have been made at different times, and the attitude towards them of trade unions and of employers and employed in some of the staple industries of the United Kingdom; and (5), as an appendix, such a selection of facts and quotations about the recent great engineering dispute as will form a short history of its relation to the question before us.

It is, perhaps, hardly possible at this time of day to throw any new light upon the general question of an eight-hours day, but it is hoped that this attempt to summarize the salient points of the controversy, which has now been raging for several years past, may prove of some use to those who lack the time necessary to an exhaustive study of the arguments which have been advanced for both sides.

Except where it has been necessary to correct fallacies, I have endeavoured not to traverse ground already covered by previous treatises on the subject, in most of which many valuable facts are incorporated.

W. J. S.

April, 1898.

AN EIGHT-HOURS DAY.

I.—ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF AN EIGHT-HOURS DAY.

THE following seem to form the chief reasons advanced in support of a demand for a general eight-hours working day :—

1. That the present hours of labour are often injurious to the health of the workers, and in some industries are a source of danger to the public also.

2. That by the anticipated absorption of the unemployed the eight-hours day would materially assist in the solution of a very difficult social problem.

3. That the alleged increase in wages which would follow on the grant of an eight-hours day would produce a fairer division of the wealth which labour helps to create.

4. That the growing desire for culture among the working classes requires to be satisfied by the grant of additional leisure.

5. That, practically, the result of the Factory Acts forms a precedent for the enforcement of a legal limit to the hours of adult male labour.

6. That the present competition between employers would be in a great measure removed by a uniformity in the hours of labour.

II.—ARGUMENTS AGAINST A LEGAL EIGHT-HOURS DAY.

THE most sound summary of objections to legislative interference is that by Mr. Bradlaugh, stated thus :—

1. That it is not, and ought not to be, the duty or business of Parliament to fix the hours during which adults may work.

2. That, although the shortest hours of labour possible in

each industry should be sought by, and are beneficial to, the employed, such hours of daily labour should be the subject of separate negotiation and arrangement in each industry, and such arrangements should be arrived at by mutual discussion and understanding between the employers and organized employed.

3. That, if "eight hours' labour per day" be translated to mean that no work of any description is to be conducted for more than eight hours in each twenty-four hours, the giving legal effect to a prohibition of that kind would certainly be serious to many of the largest industries of the country.

4. That to prevent men in all kinds of labour from working more than eight hours out of the twenty-four may, and in some cases certainly would, involve a serious reduction of the wages hitherto received.

Other objections may be summarized thus:—

5. That the introduction of a legal eight-hours day is an adoption of the system of protection.

6. That, if wages are increased by this means, profits will be so diminished that many industries will become extinct, thus ultimately swelling the ranks of, instead of absorbing, the unemployed.

7. That, unless an international system is possible, foreign competition will drive out the native product.

8. That the system of inspectorship necessary for the enforcement of international regulation is vexatious and intolerable.

9. That the function of the State is to protect, and not to restrain, the liberty of the subject, and that, therefore, a legal eight-hours day is an infringement of the liberty of an individual to make his own labour contract.

10. That a legal measure would be unworkable owing to the practical difficulties of defining the limits of each trade, and of effecting the necessary registration of members.

11. That a legal measure is unnecessary in trades where additional leisure is an economic advantage, for in such trades hours are being reduced spontaneously.

12. That reductions in hours which have accompanied the rise in wages during the last twenty years have been made in consequence, and not irrespective, of economic conditions.

Added to these may be given the reasons stated by the Massachusetts Commission appointed in 1866. The Commission opposed the adoption of an eight-hours law for the following reasons:—

1. Because they deem it unsound in principle to apply one measure of time to all kinds of labour.
 2. Because, if adopted as a general law in the way proposed, it would be rendered void by special contracts, and so add another to the dead laws that cumber the statutes.
 3. Because a very large proportion of the industrial interests of the country could not observe it.
 4. Because, if restricted, as some propose, to the employees of the State, it would be manifestly *partial*, and therefore unjust.
-

III.—FROM A SOCIAL ASPECT.

ALL employers and all partizans, both socialist and anti-socialist alike, are now pretty well agreed that the reduction of working hours to the lowest number possible is desirable—that is, as far as is consistent with the prosperity and welfare of the commercial life of the nation, and as far as is necessary for the health and citizen life of the workmen.

The whole matter is really a question of contract, "labour" forming the commodity for sale. The contract needs but two parties to it—the seller of labour and the buyer of it; and in this there is no necessity for the State to interfere. As M. Yves Guyot says: "The workmen can make bad bargains, but they can also make good ones, as the rise of wages during the last fifty years shows. The masters do not always, by any means, have the best of the bargain."

It is well nigh impossible to over-rate the advantages of fair and open discussion between employer and employed for the drawing up of the mutual agreement or contract upon the conditions of labour. The hours for local industries—industries in which there can be no competition, properly so-called (*e.g.*, railways, tramways, gas-making, etc.)—can be arranged in this way without friction, without injury to either side from a material point of view, and without dislocation of trade.

We grant, therefore, that a workman, in order to advance himself physically, mentally, and morally, has a right to claim on his side of the labour contract such hours as will ensure him health to enjoy physical recreation, as will give him leisure to cultivate his mind, and as will enable him to combat the evil

habits too often developed, if not actually induced, by excessive work. We grant also that it should be the aim of every employer to accede to fair demands of this nature, providing that they secure his business interests, on which, be it noted, the interests of the employed wholly depend. But, if the conditions of trade will permit only of excessive hours of labour, the workman is free to accept or reject them or to compromise. The trade must stand or fall by the decision of the labourers. If a trade can only be carried on at the expense of the health, if not of the life, of its workers, they themselves have the power to kill that trade. A country's industries and the Legislature ought not to occupy the positions of a child and a nurse, the latter masticating all the tough pieces of food on the child's plate, and then administering it in the form of pap. Ultra-protection and grandmotherly legislation place the workers in a humiliating position that would not be tolerated for a moment did they once clearly understand it. The duties of the Legislature are to serve the country's interests, not to tyrannically fetter and control them.

Professor J. E. Thorold Rogers, in a fine piece of writing in "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," has ably summarized these duties :—

"When a Government goes beyond its proper functions, which are to maintain the public safety, to propound useful and equitable legislation, to arbitrate between interests when it is necessary, to extinguish privileges, to unite efficiency with economy in the administration of affairs, to punish fraud and violence, and to undertake those great offices for which private action, individually or collectively, is inadequate, and attempts to distribute employments among its people, to favour one class at the expense of another, to meddle with the innocent habits of its subjects, and to mould their lives after its own pattern, to coerce the open expression of opinion and to silence criticism on its own proceedings, it makes itself, or those whose affairs it administers, responsible for all the failures of its action, and engenders the belief that, if man is made unhappy, the Government has brought about that result."

Again, Mr. W. H. Mallock points out in "Labour and the Popular Welfare"—

"that to secure what they have already got is the hope of all classes, but to increase it by legislation is the hope of

the poorer only. It is, of course, perfectly true that the rich as well as the poor are anxious, as a rule, to increase their incomes when they can. But they expect to do so by their own ability and enterprise, and they look to legislation for merely such negative help as may be given by affording their abilities fair play."

And Mr. James Annand has recently warned against State action in these words :—

"The legal eight-hours day is the initial measure of the movement for the socialization of industry.....Of all the items in the long programme of the Social Democratic Federation it is the one which needs to be most closely watched, because it seems the simplest, while it is the most subtle, and would certainly be the most readily adopted. It appeals to workmen in a way which mankind generally find it hard to resist. It promises them greater leisure from what is often exacting and uncongenial toil. It offers a weapon for use against capitalists; and its promoters describe it as a measure of social amelioration."

We have said that the worker is within his rights in asking for more leisure, and in getting it, if he can; but it is questionable whether the worker of this generation knows how to use his leisure. The uses of leisure may be classified broadly into (1) Amusement; (2) Culture; (3) Service. To fulfil each of these uses a great deal of education that is now lacking is necessary: for amusement, cultivation of the faculties of humour and of appreciation; for culture, knowledge, artistic, scientific, and social; for service, warmth of heart and a yearning for a higher life. At present it certainly would not be wise to hastily bestow upon every man a wealth of unaccustomed leisure. At the present rate of voluntary and natural progression, the next generation of workmen, who will be much more fitted than this generation to use leisure rationally, will have obtained without any violent upheaval of custom the reduced working hours asked for. The question which is providing so many agitators with a fairly luxurious living will have solved itself. To quote Sir Robert Giffen in his evidence before the Labour Commission :—

"I think the eight-hours day, to a very large extent, is coming of itself, because in many trades a greater amount of production and better quality of production is thereby

obtained from the human machine than with any other number of hours that can be devised; and I think that where that is the case you may leave the eight-hours day very well to come of itself, because it must come. I think that all the evidence which we have of the great reduction of hours which has taken place in the last thirty or forty years in cotton spinning, in cotton weaving, and in the textile trades generally, in railway employments, and in the building trades, I might add, and mining, all points to the fact that, if not an eight-hours day, something very nearly approaching to it, is coming of itself. I think that is the conclusion that one must come to from looking at all the facts of the case."

Mr. Webb thinks—and possibly with reason—that more daily leisure to the bulk of voters will increase the intelligence of the electorate, and give working men an opportunity of becoming competent for the duties of citizenship; but, as Mr. Webb also says, "Time is of the essence of the matter." *Festina lente—nec præcepta neque invitus.*

IV.—ECONOMIC EFFECTS.

THE probable economic results of a general reduction of the hours of labour are variously estimated as follows:—As regards the total product, it is sometimes stated that there will be a decrease in average productivity per worker, but by absorption of unemployed an increase in the total production of the community. On this point, however, Mr. Tom Mann's opinion on three abstract cases is instructive:—

1. Assuming that the reduction of hours had no effect upon the average output per man, and therefore no effect upon the aggregate produce, there would be no absorption of the unemployed, and no rise in wages.

2. Assuming that the reduction of hours diminished the aggregate produce without diminishing the average wages per man employed, there would be an absorption of the unemployed, whose labour would raise the aggregate produce to at least its normal amount, and possibly a rise in wages by relief of competition for employment.

3. Assuming that the greater efficiency arising from shorter hours—*i.e.*, a greater aggregate produce—would more than counterbalance the loss of time, there would be no immediate absorption of the unemployed, and no immediate rise in wages ; but the ultimate effect would be both absorption of the unemployed and rise in wages.

All supporters of a legal eight-hours day seem agreed that wages will undoubtedly increase, and they argue that, owing to an increased capacity to consume, supply and demand will not be affected. But if cost of production is increased, no additional employment can be created, for, as Professor Rogers says : "Everything which increases the cost of administering human societies diminishes the resources available for the employment of industry." On the other hand, there is also a unanimous agreement that reduction in wages is the natural effect of a diminished production per worker. In prices it is reckoned there will be no great variation, but it is conceded that the (assumed) increased wages will probably reduce profits and give a smaller interest to capital. Naturally the interest on loan capital will then fall. This, in Sir Robert Giffen's opinion, will certainly result in a withdrawal of capital. Some advocates, on the other hand, argue that, as a greater number of persons will be employed, and as the purchasing power will increase, the market will be extended, trade will expand, and profits will become greater. Hence there will be a cheapening of commodities, since the produce will be larger. With regard to international trade and foreign competition, the total export, it is urged, will not be affected ; but, in the face of the following figures given by Mr. Tom Mann, how this will be so is not clear. In a report on the eight-hours day question presented to the Labour Commission, Mr. Mann states the average hours now worked in Great Britain to be ten and a-half per day, in America eleven and a-half, in France, Belgium, and Germany twelve, and in Australia eight. With less hours, and consequently with less fatigue, efficiency of labour, it is said, will increase ; but the effects of a greater strain and a probably shortened time for meals are not taken into account. The intensity of home competition both between worker and worker, and also between employer and employer, will, it is said, be reduced. But, as Professor Hadley explains, these advocates "see that the different workmen in an industrial community compete with one another ; they fail to see that they consume one another's products. In consequence of this

one-sided view, almost any policy is favoured that reduces the intensity of competition among workmen and producers, even though it may ultimately reduce the amount of wealth that can be divided among the workmen as consumers." Again, invention, according to some, will be stimulated; according to others, it will be deadened, and stagnation, instead of progress, will ensue.

Mr. Sidney Webb, in his book on "The Eight-Hours Day," published in 1891, sums up "the probable economic results, as far as they can be discerned," as follows:—

"A general shortening of the hours of labour may slightly decrease the average productivity per worker, but will, by absorbing a part of the unemployed, probably increase the total production of the community.

"Supply, and therefore demand, will, in the aggregate, not be diminished.

"No effect will be produced upon prices generally, but some variations up and down may take place in the prices of some particular commodities.

"Some industries may, therefore, be diminished, whilst others are increased; some few products may no longer be worth producing, once the labour employed is properly treated.

"Wages generally are more likely to be raised than lowered, though it is possible that they may remain stationary, or even temporarily droop, in a few industries.

"The aggregate payment in wages will almost certainly be larger, and that for interest on capital smaller, than before.

"The export trade will almost certainly not be affected, though it may be somewhat varied in its composition.

"And the main permanent results are likely to be a rise in real time wages, and a fall in the normal rate of loan interest.

"But even these economic consequences of a sudden and universal shortening of hours, whether by law or by trade-union pressure, are not at all likely to ensue in any perceptible manner upon the gradual and partial shortening which is all that is likely to happen. In industrial organization any sudden change, however good, produces a serious dislocation; but almost any gradual change, however important, can be endured without social injury. *Time is of the essence of the matter.*"

This summary we quote with general approval, because it forms a very strong commentary upon the impossibility and unreasonableness of State action. Indeed, the whole of this particular book is a very strong argument against a compulsory eight-hours day. It is a book overladen with figures, and its facts mostly lead to very controversial conclusions, the more obvious conclusions in most cases being against either trade-union or State action.

The weakness of Mr. Webb's arguing is clear when we read that—

“a gradual widespread shortening of the hours of labour would not be likely to affect our export trade—(1) because former similar reductions have not done so.....(2) because, even now, the English cotton-spinner works fewer hours than his foreign competitors, and finds their competition keenest where their hours are shortest (as in Massachusetts), not where they are longest (as in Russia); (3) because it has been theoretically predicted and empirically proved that the reduction would not affect prices generally; and (4) because other countries are all rapidly increasing their factory legislation also.”

This is the logic that leads to the *reductio ad absurdum*, that the less work done in any particular industry the better for that particular industry, and the greater the increase in its production and export. A limit to reduction in hours there must be, and that limit has in some industries already been reached. Economic conditions, such as improved machinery, have up to now secured immunity from possible evils attending former reductions, but it is not to be assumed that the employers are able to continue invention and improvement at the same pace as hitherto. Many processes have now reached their highest point of perfection.

It would seem as if no two books urging an eight-hours day agree in methods of obtaining it, or in the conclusions deduced from the same facts. Mr. John Rae, like Mr. Sidney Webb, has produced a strong commentary against a compulsory eight-hours day. In 1894, in “Eight Hours for Work,” Mr. Rae, after a full inquiry, explodes the most vital argument for compulsory action in these words :—“The prevailing idea, that a uniform eight-hour day will abolish the unemployed, is chimerical.....It stands in absolute contradiction to our now very abundant experience of the real effects of shortening the

hours of labour, and it stands in absolute contradiction to the natural operation of economic forces.....It is not in the nature or power of an eight-hours day to.....make any serious impression on the number of the unemployed."

The testimony of *Reynolds' Newspaper* on this matter seems conclusive. "We remember," said this journal on September 5th, 1897, "the time when the eight-hours day was advocated on the ground that it would be a solution of the question of the unemployed. It was our duty frequently to combat this fallacy. If men can do as much work in eight hours as in nine or ten, there can be no question of the absorption of surplus labour. If, in addition to this, the system of overtime is to be maintained, the result will be that the unemployed will have less chance of occupation than before."

The report of the Labour Commission thus sums up the alleged economic effects upon the interests of the working classes of a reduction of the hours of labour, and the counter-arguments urged:—

"The result of such a reduction will be either to diminish or not to diminish output (or service rendered) per man. In the latter case no one will lose, while the workman will gain in additional leisure. In the former case the cost of production will be increased, but the loss will not fall on the workman. It will fall either on the consumer, who will have to pay a higher price for the commodity, or on the employer, who will be obliged to employ more hands, and who will be unable to recoup himself by reducing wages, because the absorption of the unemployed will relieve the competition of the labour market."

Against the soundness of this reasoning it is urged—

"That the working classes are consumers as well as producers, that work alone can create a demand for work, that any serious encroachment on profits and interest would tend to drive away capital from the country, and that, even if it be granted, for the sake of argument, that an eight-hours day would at the outset have the effect of absorbing the unemployed, the evil of want of employment would before long recur, whereas the remedy of successive *reductions of hours* is one that would rapidly be *exhausted*."

V.—LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER PROPOSALS.

THE following appear to be the chief legislative proposals for an eight-hours day :—

1. *A more or less rigid Act of Parliament* to enforce an eight-hours day upon all trades, commencing with Government departments and contracts, and followed up by eight-hours for railway men and miners and those employed in all local monopolies.

2. *Trade exemption*—i.e., the application of an Act of Parliament to all trades, exceptions only being made in the cases of protest on the part of the majority of the workers in any trade, after a legal vote has been taken.

3. *Trade option* by legislative enactment—i.e., an Act of Parliament to apply to any trade demanding its application by a majority-vote of all the workers in that trade, the power to grant and to administer the Act lying with the Secretary of State.

4. *Local option*—i.e., a local application of the principle of trade option, the power of administration resting with the local authorities.

5. *An Act for dangerous and unhealthy trades*, to be applied at the discretion of the Home Secretary, or to be especially enacted as the need arises.

6. *Simultaneous international action*.

7. *International trade option*.

The impossibility of a universal law is shown in the following illustration of the divergences in industrial conditions quoted from the Labour Commission Report :—

“ Trades differ endlessly in their circumstances. Some are healthy ; others more or less unhealthy. In some, the labour is severe ; in others, light. In some, work is continuous ; in others, intermittent. In some, the chief strain is on the attention ; in others, on the physical powers. In some, the hours must be practically the same for all the men employed ; in others, there is room for variety. Some trades depend on seasons or on fashions, or on the weather ; others are more regular. In some, it may be practicable to work on the shift system ; in others, not. In some, reduction of hours may lead to more men being employed ; in others, to fewer. In some, it may

involve diminution of output, and therewith increased cost of production; in others, counteracting influences may prevent such results from following. In some industries the increased cost may be in large part shifted on the consumer; in others, it will be a tax—at all events, at first—on profits, or on wages, or on both; in others, it will check demand and injure consumer, employer, and workman alike. In some, wages may be the chief item in the cost of production; in others, expenditure on plant or on raw material. Some have foreign competition to reckon with; others not so. Some trades necessitate processes which cannot be brought to an end at the stroke of the clock; in others, there is no such difficulty.”

It should also be noticed that in these proposals the wishes of the employing party are apparently not to be taken into account. The workers, as a class, seem reputed to desire autocratic power, and to make capital subservient to labour, instead of allowing each side concerned to exercise the rights of a party to a strictly business contract. It is needless to point out the injustice of dealing with continuous effective labour in exactly the same manner as with the mere preparatory work.

With regard to precedent, there is a prevailing belief that the eight-hours day is fixed by statutory enactment in the Australasian Colonies. Mr. Jeans points out that this is not so. “In 1892 a return was obtained on the motion of the late Mr. Bradlaugh, that showed that even in the most ‘advanced’ of the British Colonies there were no laws in operation affecting the hours of adult male labour. Eight or nine Colonies, including Western Australia, South Australia, and the Cape, have no laws affecting adult labour at all. New Zealand is generally understood to be the palladium of the eight-hours day [in section xiii. we reprint the latest Bill]; but even there no legislation exists on the hours of adult males, except the Coal Mines Act of 1886, which limits certain kinds of mining labour to eight hours a day, exclusive of meal-times and of time spent in preparatory work or in repairs. In Tasmania an Eight Hours Bill has been introduced several times, but it has never been adopted. In Victoria the only law regulating the hours of labour is the Factory and Shop Act of 1890 (which limits the hours of adult females to forty-eight hours per week, subject to power of suspension by the Minister of the Crown to meet the exigencies of trade), and a law affecting adult male labour

in mines. In Queensland, although there is no general legislation on the subject, work in the State railway workshops is limited by the by-laws of the Railway Commissioners to eight hours per day. In Canada the provinces of Quebec and Ontario have a Ten Hours Act for females, but no limit for males."

The case for a legislative eight-hours day in Great Britain utterly breaks down on the question of overtime. Messrs. Webb and Cox, for instance, say :—

"We have shown that in mechanical industries overtime must be allowed in the case of unforeseen emergencies—as, for example, to repair a breakdown of machinery; that in agricultural and kindred industries overtime must be allowed to prevent the spoiling of materials; that in certain season trades overtime must be allowed to get through the pressure of work. The limit of overwork allowed need not necessarily be the same in all the various cases covered under these heads. But in all cases some limit should be imposed by Parliament. Further, in order to prevent the danger of overtime, even within these limitations, becoming habitual, we make two suggestions.

"The first of these is that a spell of overtime during one part of the year should be compensated for by a definite holiday at the slack season.....Our second suggestion is that where casual overtime, from whatever cause it arises, cannot be absolutely prohibited, it should be required by law that it should be paid for at an increased rate."

This means that the writers above quoted have no faith in their own supposed convictions. They offer a loophole out of any Act, and applaud the inconsistency of Mr. Hyndman, who suggests in his draft Eight Hours Bill that—

"in cases of special unforeseen emergency, each person who shall, by reason of such emergency, work beyond the period of eight working hours in any one day, or forty-eight working hours in any one week, shall be entitled to receive, and shall receive, from the individual, firm, or company so employing such person, notwithstanding any stipulation or contract to the contrary, expressed or implied, double the rate of wages per hour which has been paid per hour during the normal working day of eight working hours, for each hour of overtime so worked."

Mr. Rae's book, entitled "Eight Hours for Work," is similar

—as I have said—to Mr. Webb's, in that it contains a vast number of disjointed facts and figures which are capable of being strung together in various ways, to allow of varying deductions. The value of the courses advocated in the book—so far as any advocacy at all can be discovered—may be gauged when we read that, if we believe in an eight-hours day, "we shall not feel deeply concerned whether it is to come by means of employers' concessions, or of trade-union agency, or of legislation." The method of the coming of the eight-hours day, when it is other than a natural evolution, is just what creates all the difficulty; and, if a writer is unable to realize that, his work must be of very little assistance in determining important issues. Mr. Rae seems to lean towards Professor Jevons' opinion, that "the State is justified in passing any law, or even in doing any single act which, without ulterior consequence, adds to the sum-total of happiness." Now, the majority enjoying this sum-total consists of the average man; and although the average man looks to the State—that is, to the judicial powers he helps to support—for his immunity from molestation, for liberty to pursue his own way, provided it does not interfere with another person's way—in a word, for safety—he certainly does not look for happiness. Happiness is a positive possession. The State can only tend negative gifts—chiefly the power to deter. It does not fetter individual freedom—it affords protection from interference. Professor Jevons chose an unfortunate word. And yet Mr. Rae advocates the State usurping to itself what it was formed to prevent in others—interference. The State is a vast combination—a joint union of all classes, combined for purposes of defence, not for purposes of attack. Therefore, when Mr. Rae says, "If interference benefits 20,000 persons, while non-interference benefits only 10,000, the State's duty is to interfere," he talks not only nonsense, but pernicious nonsense. For he is urging the combination to be divided against itself—that two-thirds should attack one-third. It is impossible to reconcile such measures of coercion with any ideal of individual freedom, whether that ideal be preconceived or sequent.

Tersely expressed, the eight-hours day movement is merely a conspiracy originally got up by socialist agitators to unwarrantably increase wages by legislative enactment, and thus prepare the way for a wholesale State regulation of wages. Against all such plausible and alluring, but insidious, proposals as a compulsory eight-hours day, the employed as well as

employers must be sternly warned. The danger is clear when we analyse Mr. Webb's contention, that "the community claims the right to prevent a man from selling his excessive labour in such a way as to cause other workers to be compelled to work as long as he does.....In other words, his liberty is to be curtailed in order that the liberty of others may be extended." This is simply a theory of confiscation, and it is defensible by no moral law.

With regard to trade option, it will be remembered that on June 12th, 1892, Mr. Gladstone received a deputation from the London Trades Council, and shortly afterwards suggested the scheme of trade option, although, at the same time, he acknowledged the difficulties of establishing a uniform rule, of ascertaining the opinions of the majority of a trade, of defining a trade and a locality, and of recognising legally trade membership, organization, and responsibility.

The refusal in 1894 of the promoters of the Miners' Eight Hours Bill to accept the principle of local option led to the withdrawal of the Bill. At the Committee stage an amendment that the Bill expire in December, 1899, was accepted and passed. A second amendment, to the effect that only in such districts or mines where a majority of those working underground were in favour of the eight hours should the measure be enforced, aroused the intense opposition of the promoters, and when the amendment passed by 112 to 107 the Bill was withdrawn.

We have chronicled the suggestions for international movements, but they are too chimerical to need combating seriously. On March 1st, 1897, at the Brussels Gasworks, 186 workpeople struck for three eight-hours shifts, in place of two twelve-hours. On the 11th 33 men, for whom only there were vacancies, were received back; and during the strike the supply of gas to the city was not interrupted. A failure as decided as this shows the futility of expecting the universe to become a socialist fraternity within a considerable number of centuries.

Other proposals are as follows :—

1. *Voluntary action by mutual agreement*—i.e., the question of hours to be a condition settled in the labour contract. This is the course favoured by the opponents of socialist legislation; and, in support, the opinion of an extremely temperate writer is valuable. Dr. Schäffle, in his "Theory and

Policy of Labour Protection" commits himself in favour of a legal ten or eleven hours day for industrial work, with special provisions for specially dangerous or exhausting trades, and with freedom of contract below that limit, and brings evidence to show, as he alleges, that such a step has already been justified by experience. But he pronounces emphatically against the universal compulsory eight-hours day; he is inclined to think that the necessity for a maximum working day, on grounds of protective policy, does not extend much beyond factory and quasi-factory labour, many wage-workers finding sufficient protection in the force of public opinion, in moral influence, and custom.

2. *Coercive action upon employers*—i.e., enforcement of a reduction of hours by trade unions acting tyrannically in the alleged interests of their members. This opens up a broad question of trade unionism, whether the functions of trade unions should not be confined to protecting the individual interests of their members, and acting in matters of a provident and friendly character, or whether trade unions shall interfere in the labour contract and attempt to dictate terms to their members, and, by means of organized strikes, force employers to accept them. While patient negotiation such as that carried on by the Cleveland blast furnacemen cannot be complained of, the Penrhyn quarry dispute and the great engineering dispute have brought the question of undue interference to a climax, and once for all shown that employers are masters in their own works, and intend to be. It being thus clear, by undisputed accomplishment, that in future no dictatorial policy on the part of any trade-union official will be tolerated, the following contention of Professor A. T. Hadley falls to the ground. In his book on "Economics," published in 1896, Mr. Hadley says: "If the employees were united in a universal strike in the whole trade, for the sake of reduction of hours, they could force a compliance with their demands." "But," he adds, "in many trades a minority of unintelligent employees could defeat the change altogether." Therefore, he proceeds to argue, recourse must be had to legislative enactments. "To be successfully applied, a law reducing hours of labour must be strictly mandatory, and not permissive or optional. The conditions under which overtime is to be allowed must be accurately defined, and the provisions of the law on this subject must be enforced, even in cases where its enforcement involves hardship. It is fatal to the success of an Act if public

sentiment justifies individuals in taking the matter of exceptions into their own hands."

On the first point, as we have said, the complete defeat of the combined engineers of the whole country shows that a universal strike is not *a priori* successful, because lock-outs and employment of "free labour" are neither unknown nor despicable weapons in the hands of employers. On the compulsory legislation question we have already, in section ii., summarized objections, and, indeed, the whole of this book is intended to oppose the idea.

VI.—FACTS TO BE BORNE IN MIND.

IN forming definite conclusions upon the eight-hours question, in addition to the above-mentioned possible and probable economic effects, the following facts have also to be borne in mind:—

That the question of an eight-hours day has been raised in response to two imperative demands: (1) a demand for leisure, and (2) a demand for work, which are self-contradictory; and that the solution of the question lies in the reconciliation of the two demands.

That the present tendency is towards a general reduction of the hours of labour, and that the eight hours day is thus coming of itself.

That the growing tendency of a most dangerous character, to look to the Legislature or the Government to supply immediate remedies for all evils, however arising, in the struggle for existence, is a violation of the spirit of sturdy independence which characterizes the British nation.

That, as Professor Thorold Rogers points out, the Act of Elizabeth, and the regulations of Quarter Sessions, which prescribed twelve hours' work a day all the year round, only provoked evasions and resistance on the part of employer and employed.

That the present eight-hours day laws in thirteen of the United States are a dead letter—not one of them is enforced, or attempted to be enforced.

That in the case of skilled trades carried on by adult men the normal hours of labour, though untouched by the Factory Acts, have shown a tendency of recent years to approximate to nine a day, or fifty-four a week.

That well-organized workmen have but very rarely lost the

gains really acquired by them in the way of reduction of hours of work, and that the tendency to the reduction of the normal working-day by voluntary effort and negotiation with employers does not appear to have exhausted itself.

That the unemployed mainly consist of unskilled labourers, who cannot be absorbed into the skilled industries even if the hours of the skilled artisans are curtailed and vacancies for additional workers created.

That a distinction must be drawn between an hour of work and an hour of duty.

That a forty-eight-hours week, being an admission of the right to work overtime, involves increased difficulties with regard to wages.

That many workmen prefer longer hours five days of the week, in order to obtain a weekly half-holiday.

That, in Mr. Jeans' words, "when Parliament interfered to limit the hours of women and children in factories, both were being overtaxed beyond their strength, amid surroundings that were not generally so salutary or so sanitary as they should have been. The hours of labour were much longer than they are now; the education of the children was being neglected; the health and maternity of the women was being injured, and other objectionable features were common."

That there is no such thing as a genuine eight-hours working day, and three shifts are thus impossible; for five days nine and three-quarter hours (including one hour for dinner) are expended, and on Saturday four and a-quarter hours for the half-day.

That the demand—such as it is—is for eight hours' limited work for nine hours' full pay.

That the trade-union ideal is the substitution of time work, with a restricted output, for piece-work.

That, even with the retention of piece-work labour, the cost would be increased if, as Messrs. Webb and Cox argue, "the economic conditions which enable a day's wage to be maintained with shorter hours will quickly cause a rise in piece rates."

That, as Professor Hadley states, reductions of hours bear heaviest, not on the employer—not on the man who has money to spend—but on the labour of those who cannot stand the increased speed, and are therefore forced to a choice between a lower standard of comfort or an intensity of strain which they cannot bear.

That although, according to Professor J. E. Thorold Rogers, "it is plain that the day was one of eight hours" in the golden age of the fifteenth century, a reversion to ancestral practice cannot be regarded as a progressional step.

That, in Mr. Webb's words, "it is easy to attribute too much importance to the nine-hours day which has been gained in the skilled trades. To a large extent the change from ten to nine was a change in name only."

That legal action is heartily opposed by the representatives of such diverging political interests as the Liberals of the old school, the modern Conservatives, and by representatives of such opposing principles as the Anarchists and the Liberty and Property Defence League.

That, on the question of expediency, the only legitimate argument in favour of any further reduction of hours, those most nearly concerned—viz., the employers of labour—are the best judges, and that they, with the public and the workers, alone have the right to decide such question.

That an eight-hours day will have to abolish seasons, or relax its rigidity by providing for such contingencies, and therefore cease to be an eight-hours day.

That, in considering precedents and contrasting wages before 1850 for long hours with wages after 1850 for short hours, it must be borne in mind that other economic conditions than hours and various contemporary events had their due effects, and that neither statements that reduced hours necessarily imply higher wages, nor statements that reduced hours must create an equivalent reduction in wages, are legitimate arguments.

That Sunday work, night work, and overtime, in certain trades and industries, are inevitable.

That, if the principle of State interference with working hours is conceded, the Legislature may also seek to control the uses of a man's leisure.

That the growth of the employment of women in almost every branch of industry is a factor which can in no wise be ignored.

That the schemes for compulsory early closing already tried have resulted in utter failure.

That definite limitation of hours of work in such cases as those of agricultural labourers, seamen, domestic servants, and persons working at their trades alone and in their own homes, is too absurd a proposition for serious discussion.

That the maximum working day, applied only to industrial labour, lacks completeness.

That the working classes are by no means unanimous in demanding a reduced working day.

That the aristocracy of the manual classes—*i.e.*, the old trade unionists—heartily oppose a legal eight-hours day.

That, even if the ten-hours day of labour protection be approved as not socialistic, but a purely legitimate State protective regulation, it must be remembered that, in the words of Dr. Schäffle, "the legal eight-hours day threatens to ultimately develop, should socialism as an experiment ever be tried, into a (socially) normal—*i.e.*, maximum—working day of the worst possible kind."

That the logical sequence to State regulation of hours is State regulation of wages.

Many more points might be referred to, but it will be sufficient to enumerate these few without enlarging on them. For a last note on this head let us look at some additional opinions upon the functions of Government, from which some sidelights on the question of reduced hours may be thrown. In the introduction to an old edition (1836) of Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" M. Garnier summarizes Adam Smith's doctrine by saying that the power by which a nation creates its wealth is its labour; that the quantity of wealth created will increase in direct proportion as the power increases; and that the increase of power may take place in two ways—in energy and in extent. He then proceeds to give his view of the functions of Government:—

"To accomplish the increase of labour in both these ways.....the exertions to be made by its (a nation's) Government," M. Garnier says, are "the subdivision of labour and the invention and perfecting of machines..... Let the Government, then, direct its attention to the enlargement of the market, by forming safe and convenient roads, by the circulation of sterling coin, and by securing the faithful fulfilment of contract..... Under this second head of the increase of the products of labour the exertions of Government are much more easy. In fact, it has only to refrain from doing harm. It is only required of it that it shall protect the natural liberty of industry; that it shall leave open every channel into which, by its own tendencies, industry may be carried; that Govern-

ment shall abandon it to its own direction, and shall not attempt to point its efforts one way more than another; for private interest, that infallible instinct which guides the exertions of all industry, is infinitely better suited than any legislator to judge of the direction which it will with most advantage follow. Let Government, then, renounce alike the system of prohibitions and of bounties; let it no longer attempt to impede the efforts of industry by regulations, or to accelerate its progress by rewards; let it leave in the most perfect freedom the exertions of labour and the employment of capital; let its protecting influence extend only to the removal of such obstacles as avarice or ignorance has raised up to the unlimited liberty of industry or commerce; then capitals will naturally develop themselves, by their own movement, in those directions which are at once most agreeable to the private interest of the capitalist, and most favourable to the increase of the national wealth."

This opinion, coming from one of the early-century French economists, after a careful study of Adam Smith, reflects the general views of his period. The modern tendency of the opposing school of economic thought cannot be better illustrated than by the following opinions expressed by Mr. Sidney Webb. Mr. Webb urges that it may reasonably be contended that prevention of excessive hours of labour, for whatever cause, is one of the essential duties of Government in an advanced industrial community. It is a primary duty of Government to prescribe the plane on which it will allow the struggle for existence to be fought out. The whole history of Government is a long series of limitations of the conditions of the struggle, with a view to raising the quality of existence. No individual competitor can lay down the rules of the combat, nor safely choose the higher plane, so long as his opponent is at liberty to fight on the lower. The power of the Government should be used to make good the loss of individual liberty which has been caused by economic development.

Here are two definite courses advocated for choice. Accept the teaching of the old economists, with its historical result—a century's growth. Compare the magnitude of commerce a hundred years ago with its magnitude now. Note the marvellous strides. Or, join the advocates of the new theories in

their experiments with other people's property, other people's labour, other people's capital.

VII.—THE GOVERNMENT AS EMPLOYER.

THE results of the inquiry in 1893 by the Secretary of State for the War Department into the adoption of the forty-eight-hours week in private engineering works, the productions of which are analogous to the great ordnance and small arms factories at Woolwich, Enfield, and Birmingham, are stated to have proved satisfactory in every material particular. "As regards the amount and quality of the work done, the change made scarcely any appreciable difference in the proportion borne by wages to output, while there is conclusive evidence of saving resulting from lost time, economy of fuel and gas, and diminution of wear and tear of machinery." The system was, therefore, adopted in the Government Ordnance Factory and at the Pimlico Army Clothing Factory at the end of February, 1894; it affected nearly 18,000 people employed by the War Office. A reduction of hours to forty-eight per week in the Admiralty establishments, which took effect on July 2nd, 1894, applied to 22,571 persons employed in the Dockyards at Portsmouth, Chatham, Sheerness, Deptford, and Pembroke. A similar reduction was introduced November 8th, 1894, into the Naval Ordnance Department, and affected 925 persons. The average forty-eight-hours week had been in operation at the Woolwich Dépôt since April 2nd, 1894. It there affected 398 persons. The day-work rates and piece-work prices remained unaltered, but certain customary allowances were discontinued.

The action of the Government was undoubtedly hasty, and it has been severely criticised. Mr. Jeans says:—

"It is a matter for regret that the British Government have allowed the workmen—or, rather, their representatives in the Dockyard constituencies—to force their hand in this matter. The views entertained by the responsible Ministers do not appear to have been very keenly in favour of an eight-hours day, until, at any rate, a very recent date. It appears that when, in March, 1893, Sir John Gorst and Colonel Lloyd brought in a motion that the conditions of labour in the Dockyards as regards hours, wages, etc.,

should be such as to set an example to private employers throughout the country, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, speaking for the Government, said that they did not take the motion to mean that 'we should embark in new experiments far ahead of general practice,' and he added that 'the public money is not given for the purpose of experiments such as might lead to heavy loss in private trade, such as the most open-minded and open-hearted employer might shrink from entering on'; while he finally declared that he accepted, in the fullest sense, 'the principle that the terms of Government should be beyond reproach; but I draw a great distinction between that and the proposal that we should forge ahead of public opinion.'

It is clear that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was afterwards actuated solely by party motives, and that his later action, in view of his former personal attitude, may justly be unfavourably criticised. While protesting against the general principle of the State as direct employer of labour, we hold, however, that where the State has obtained control of work, even of work more fitted for private enterprise, it is rather the duty of the Government to err to the side of granting exceptional terms to its employees than to set a bad example of grinding and sweating. Its conditions of employment should be model, if only as an object-lesson of the impracticability of perfection.

The whole business conclusively proves the validity of our contention that the State as a general employer is, through its officials, a bungling administrator, for the men are dissatisfied with the conditions reduced hours have imposed; a direct financial loss, it is stated, has resulted, and—as tacitly admitting the impracticability of the general application of the system, most important of all—at Woolwich it is necessary to actually except from its operations stokers and locomotive engine-drivers, and the workmen employed in mills and forges, where the processes are carried on continuously.

To again quote Mr. Jeans:—

"The State factories are, in every sense, monopolist institutions. They are not conducted on commercial principles. They have no competition to face or to fear. They have abundant resources at their command, and they are administered under a system which is a law unto itself. All these conditions are reversed in the case of

private enterprise. The private employer has to face and overcome the most strenuous rivalry in all the markets in the world, including his own. He must make allowances for the depreciation of his plant and machinery. He must keep himself up-to-date in processes and appliances affecting his own special industry, or be left behind in the race. He must so administer his business as to earn a profit, or he cannot live."

In the engineering dispute, to which we refer later, the men's demands are based in part on the fact that the State gives an eight-hours day; but, the employers having shown that they cannot do so, the demand should have been instantly withdrawn. The action of the State indirectly suggested the demand; but the Admiralty cannot be blamed for the prolongation of the dispute. That notoriety belongs to the socialist element in the dispute. The fact that a charitable example has been set does not in itself compel imitation. The employers are within every right in refusing a demand their industry—with the factor of competition included—cannot support. We believe that the vulnerable points in the action of the Admiralty are—first, the lamentable unworthiness of its motives, and, next, the bad general administration; the latter, however, being capable of remedy.

From some points of view, there thus appears good ground for such satisfaction that it is not unreasonable to suggest that the State might with advantage turn its attention to its Civil Service Clerical Departments. The advocates of legislative interference with the hours of labour of trades and industries not pertaining to the defence of the State, nor necessary to the carrying on of its business, and over which, therefore, it has no rights of direct control, have surely no knowledge of how the State mismanages its Clerical Departments. The fame of Post Office slavery and official tyranny is world-wide. But less is perhaps known of the immense waste of time and energy, to say nothing of the extra cost involved by overtime pay, in many Government offices and departments in Whitehall.

Mr. L. J. Jennings, M.P., put the case against red-tape very forcibly in the *Fortnightly Review*, in August, 1888. "Look, for instance," he said, "at the Admiralty and the War Office. These two departments alone cost the country £563,324 a year. The waste of labour that goes on daily is incredible. At the Admiralty the officials, sitting under the same roof,

write long letters to one another on the most trivial subjects, just as if they were five hundred miles apart. An immense heap of correspondence may be accumulated about a stick of sealing-wax or a bit of string. The Accountant-General's Department, crammed with extravagantly-paid officials, involves charges for the working staff of £63,557 a year, and a pension list of £32,324.....The Secretary of the Admiralty, Mr. Forwood, has admitted (First Report of Sir Matthew White Ridley's Commission, Q. 9,751) that, if the salaries were placed on a 'commercial basis,' the expense of the Accountant-General's Office would be brought down to £35,000 or £40,000 a year. Why is it not placed on a commercial basis? It cannot be because the authorities have not a free hand in the 'game of reorganization.' There have been at least five heroic operations of this kind since 1869, at tremendous cost to the country. What sort of commentary is it on the great reorganization of 1878-80—which cost the country £20,000 a year in pensions, and £52,199 in bonuses—that the Department is now found to be filled, as the heads of it allege, with extravagantly-paid or incompetent officials?.....The War Office clerk goes leisurely to his duties at ten or eleven, and remains till four or five, his prescribed hours being six each day. And what is the nature of his work? A good deal of it is utterly thrown away. Accounts are audited and reaudited in a purely arbitrary and farcical manner.....Correspondence rolls on in huge volumes about trifles light as air—a charge for the use of a cab, a bill of 2s. 6d. for candles, a rent in a soldier's jacket, the loss of a nosebag (actual instances of these cases will be found in the evidence taken before the Army Estimates Committee, 1887 and 1888) may form the theme of an almost interminable number of letters. The cut in the soldier's jacket was 'inquired into' by the colonels, lieutenant-colonels, deputy adjutant-general, assistant deputies, and all sorts of high officials. The documents were entered into books, signed, stamped, and passed on from one to the other for nearly four weeks."

A glaring but typical instance of dishonest overtime-working is found in a large Department instituted chiefly in the interests of the intellectual growth of the younger members of the community. Some extra duties recently devolved upon this office, and a certain sum was granted for overtime-pay. It was found that the additional work could be easily accomplished within the regular hours. The clerks, therefore, received

(unofficially, of course) orders to waste two hours during the day in order to leave work for the two hours' overtime per night allowed!

With such practices as these occurring in State employments, the conditions of which are supposed to be models for all employers to strive after, it is ridiculous in the extreme to urge the State to control the conditions of work in other industries also.

VIII.—TYPICAL INSTANCES OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION WITH REGARD TO A FORTY-EIGHT-HOURS WEEK.

Adoption of a Forty-Eight-Hours Week.

AFTER two years' trial by a firm of silver finers in Sheffield (the Sheffield Smelting Company), the result of the adoption of the eight-hours working day was in 1894 reported highly satisfactory. The relative cost of wages both to the quantity of material smelted, and to the quantity of bullion produced, is stated to be slightly less, while practically the same wages have been earned by the men. It is also reported that, while the men in the shorter hours do fully as much work as they formerly did, they "are fresher and brighter in every respect." As typical firms, it may be mentioned that the system has also been permanently adopted by, among others, Messrs. Allan & Co., engineers, of Sunderland, employing 400 men; Hadfield's Steel Foundry Company at Sheffield, and Ransome and Rapier's at Ipswich, and a number of small engineering repair shops in London. The Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company (employing 3,000 men) have worked the eight-hours system since November, 1892; but it should be added that a "good-fellowship" scheme of bonus-sharing has also been adopted, and that other special circumstances prevail. The most recent trials of the system will be found in its adoption by Messrs. Kynoch, gunmakers, of Birmingham, and (from January 1st, 1898) by Messrs. Jones

and Attwood, engineers, of Stourbridge, Worcs., employing 150 men. Messrs. Truman, Hanbury, Buxton, & Co., in the brewing industry, early in 1897 (May 21st), granted an eight-hours day to 176 of their employees, without reduction of pay, and also decided to grant an annual week's holiday, with payment for the same, to the whole of the permanent staff. Messrs. Guinness & Co., brewers, Dublin (from February 21st, 1898), voluntarily reduced the hours of their workmen to 46½ per week.

The published result of an experimental eight-hours day at Messrs. Mather & Platt's engineering works at Salford, from March 1st, 1893, to March 31st, 1894, may be summarized thus:—It was found that, as compared with the six previous years, the ratio of the cost of wages to the turnover increased by 0.4 per cent.; but this was counterbalanced by the decrease to the same extent in wear and tear and cost of consumables. There was a marked improvement in "lost time," its proportion to the total time worked having been reduced from 2.46 to 0.46 per cent. The piece-workers at first showed a falling off in the percentage earned over what they would have received as day wages; but, as the year advanced, there was a steady adaptation to the altered conditions, the difference decreasing from 1.76 to 0.78 per cent. on the standard piece-rate wages, and it was expected that even the small balance remaining would soon disappear. It should be mentioned that no overtime whatever was worked, except for breakdowns and repairs. Extra men were employed on the double-shift plan to meet extra pressure of work. The chief criticisms against this alleged success are contained in the detailed scrutiny to which Mr. Mather's experiment has been subjected by correspondence in the *Times*, in Mr. Jeans' book, and in public utterances. From these it appears to be contended, among other objections, that the length of time of the experiment was inadequate; that any gain was mainly due to abolition of overtime and its extra pay; that the character of work done during the trial year differed materially from preceding years; that piece-workers have a reserve force of from 30 to 60 per cent., which, on reduction of hours, they bring into play to their physical detriment; that, as the further report promised has not been forthcoming, the announcement of complete success was doubtless premature.

The coming of the eight-hours day in co-operative establish-

ments is not very rapid. According to the *Labour Gazette*, out of 1,123 Distributive Societies, employing 27,712 persons, in Great Britain, in 1896, only 74, employing 2,698 persons, or 9.7 per 100 employees, worked forty-eight hours per week or under, as compared with 9.8 in 1895. Out of 522 Productive Societies, employing 9,898 persons, only 40, employing 893 persons, or 9.0 per cent., worked forty-eight hours per week or under, as compared with 7.9 in 1895. These figures are based on returns collected by the Co-operative Union.

Of typical voluntary experiments abroad a few instances may be given:—The result at a weaving factory in Moravia is given by the Brunn Chamber of Commerce report for 1893: A $24\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. reduction of working hours was accompanied by a $23\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. increase in earnings per hour. Closer observation showed that the weavers working shorter hours displayed greater industry and efficiency, and seldom left their looms or stood about talking. The hours of all weavers in the establishment were, in consequence, reduced to eight, including intervals, and a considerable saving in working expenses has resulted. A similar success is stated to have attended the experiment made in the sheet iron works of Schnidelwald (Bohemia).

An experimental reduction of working hours was undertaken in May, 1894, in a paper mill at Dobrush, in the province of Moghilev (Russia). The result has been described by the director of the mill in a pamphlet. It appears that a change was made from two twelve-hours shifts to three eight-hours shifts. In order to complete the third shift fifteen more men had to be engaged, bringing up the total number of shift workers to 193. The actual amount paid in wages to the 193 men between May 1st and October 1st, 1894, came to £10 10s. more than was paid to the 178 men during the corresponding period of 1893, or 2s. 7d. per head less per month for the original set of men. The extra cost in wages does not amount to 1 per cent., and there has been no other additional expenditure. The director states that the operatives have conscientiously fulfilled the obligations they undertook in return for the more favourable conditions of work; that the product has suffered neither in quality nor in quantity, and that a great improvement is observable in the health and spirits of the men.

The following list, which does not pretend to be exhaustive,

but which is typical of voluntary action taken by English firms during the past year, is compiled from the *Labour Gazette* issued in 1897:—

Hours reduced to forty-eight per week.

Date.	Class of Workmen.	No.	Locality.	Previous Hours per Week.
1897.				
Jan. 4	Dyers (Male)	103	Liverpool	54
"	" (Female)	167	"	50
Jan. 8	Shop Repairers	400-500	London	54
Mar. 1	Ship & Engine Smiths	37	"	54
Mar. 8	Ironfounders	54	"	54
-Apr. 5	Dressers	13	"	54
	Labourers	21	"	54
June 1	Iron & Brass Founders	15	"	54
May 1	Lithographic Artists & Engravers	90	Nottingham	51
July 9	Printers	78	London	52
Oct. 1	Engineers	250	Stafford	54

In a later section dealing with statistics (section xii.) will be found the official reports for the years 1894, 1895, 1896.

From slight information of this nature it is impossible to draw any conclusions as to the success of the experiments—nor are the official reports more explicit—more especially as it is not clear whether or not wages were simultaneously reduced. The cases enumerated, however, are so few that the value of complete data—even if obtainable—is doubtful. We have, therefore, not investigated the specific cases.

Reversion to Longer Hours.

On the other hand, it may be instanced that, on May 4th, 1896, 100 workpeople in engineering works at Plymouth were increased from forty-eight to fifty-four; and on July 27th, 1896, 100 brassworkers at Leeds were similarly advanced; and Messrs. J. & F. Howard, of Bedford, manufacturers of agricultural tools, employing 500 men, reverted on June 12th, 1895, to fifty-four hours.

Recently many of the London engineering firms who conceded the eight-hours day to their men have found it necessary

to revert to the old hours. Messrs. Caird & Rayner, who tried the system for twelve months, said in September, 1897:—

“Experience during the past year has proved that work executed on that system has certainly been most costly, notwithstanding the fact that our new works, and modern machinery and appliances, have given us special facilities for more economical working than formerly. We may state that, since we voluntarily gave the eight-hours day, we have experienced more trouble than previously from the interference of the various unions in the regulation and apportionment of our work. The conviction that our very existence depended upon having complete control and a free hand in the management of our works led us unhesitatingly to throw in our lot with the Employers’ Federation.

Other instances are given in the summary of the engineering dispute.

Negotiation for Adoption of Reduced Hours.

The following are instances of the refusal (1) of workpeople to accept a forty-eight-hours week offered by the employers; (2) of employers to adopt, until after repeated application and peaceful negotiation, a forty-eight-hours week at the desire of their employees:—

1. In 1894, according to the *Labour Gazette*, a firm in the pottery trade “informed the workpeople that an eight-hours day will be introduced at once if they will make suggestions as to the way it is to be worked. The workpeople, however, have made no response. The potters themselves do not, on an average, work eight hours a day.”

2. The report of the Cleveland Ironmasters’ Association for 1894 makes reference to the application of the blast-furnacemen for an eight-hours shift, which the Association was unable to entertain owing to the increased cost which would thereby be caused. Four firms (all non-associated), however, adopted the eight-hours shift, and at the end of the year ten furnaces out of ninety-four in blast were working the shorter shifts. On December 20th, 1894, “figures were submitted by the men for certain works showing a probable increase in the necessary staff of about 20 per cent. (viz., from 443 to 533). They were prepared to accept a reduction in wages to the extent of receiving pay for seven days a week, instead of seven and a half, as at present (Sunday work being no longer paid for extra).”

The ironmasters' reply, dated January 28th, 1895, entered in detail into the question, concluding that, "even on the most favourable showing of the men, they are asking the Cleveland ironmasters to pay, in the aggregate, wages to an amount much in excess of what is now the case." As regards the West Coast districts in which the eight-hours shifts prevail, the reply said: "In such of the other districts as have adopted the eight-hours shift, its effect appears to have been much the reverse of beneficial to the trade, as evidenced by the falling-off in the output of those districts and otherwise." Figures were given showing the recent falling-off, both in the proportion contributed by Great Britain to the world's output of pig-iron, and in the number of tons of iron and steel exported from the United Kingdom. "It is the cheapness of the iron made in Cleveland which has secured the amount of work which has fallen to this district;" and, in view of the keenness of foreign competition, it is "essential to the very existence of our local trade that nothing should add to the causes which are so actively in operation to deprive us of the markets which remain to us." Finally, readiness was expressed to go carefully into any schemes which "make the cost of an eight-hours shift no greater than one of twelve hours."

Ultimately an agreement was signed that the scale at present in use should not terminate before March 31st, 1897, and that with three months' notice.

On December 7th, 1897, at an interview between the associated ironmasters and the delegates of the blast-furnace men from the associated works, it was agreed to bring the three-shift system into operation on December 18th, and to renew the sliding scale to December 31st, 1900.

IX.—TRADE UNIONS AND THE EIGHT HOURS QUESTION.

CONSIDERABLE difference of opinion on the subject of an eight-hours day appears to exist among the trade unions. Trade unions, on the whole, the strongest in particular, really

object to State regulation, and only through the weakness of the organization of certain trades agree to such proposals. In some cases, where the union officials are in favour of regulating and reducing the hours, the members themselves are opposed to it. In most unions, moreover, where there is a majority of members in favour of regulation, there is a strong minority against it. In spite of this, however, it seems that the principle of depriving the individual of his full freedom of contract in settling his hours of labour is accepted, if not altogether approved, by the bulk of the trade unionists in the country. Indeed, as Mr. Mann has pointed out, such freedom is irrevocably lost already, inasmuch as modern business establishments can be conducted only on the basis of uniformity in the men's hours of labour. The individual, he says, has practically no voice in determining how long he is to work; he must work either the same hours as his fellows, or not at all. And it is here that the trade unions find themselves in an embarrassing position—in fact, in a dilemma. Nearly all trade unions have enrolled a larger number of members than the trade can accommodate, in order to prevent wages being lowered by competition of non-unionist labour. They are consequently compelled either to expend much of their funds in support of their unemployed members, or to adopt a policy seriously diminishing the power of their employed members to pay their subscriptions.

In passing, it is interesting to record in detail the disposal of the £2,232,290 expended in 1893 (the year of the great mining strike) by the 677 trade unions which, in that year, made returns as to membership, income, expenditure, etc., to the Board of Trade. In 1893 the amount of expenditure by trade unions per head for certain benefits (calculated on the basis of the total membership of all societies, and not on the membership of the societies with a particular class of benefits) was 11s. 5d. for dispute benefit, expended by 328 societies; 8s. 1d. for unemployed, travelling, and emigration, by 373 societies; 5s. 5d. for working and other expenses, by 669 societies; 3s. 9d. for sick and surgeon benefits, by 225 societies; 1s. 10d. for superannuation benefits by 89 societies; 1s. 5d. for funeral benefit, by 385 societies; 1s. for grants to other trade unions, by 400 societies; 5d. for accident benefit, by 98 societies; and 1s. 10d. for other benefits, grants, etc., by 387 societies; making a total of £1 15s. 2d. (including an average unspecified expenditure). This total expenditure per head was £1 1s. 4d. in 1891, and

£1 8s. 6d. in 1892. Compared with the years 1891 and 1892, it is seen that nearly the whole of the increase in income and expenditure has been used for expenses in the conduct of strikes specified as "disputes benefit." This benefit in 1891 was—as it should be—less than the unemployed and sick benefits; but in 1893, while the unemployed benefit rose from 3s. 11d. in 1891, and from 6s. 3d. in 1892 to 8s. 2d., and the sick benefit remained exactly the same, the disputes benefit has risen from 3s. 7d. in 1891, and from 7s. 6d. in 1892, to 11s. 5d. per head!

The only later similar figures available are for the year 1894. From these it appears that the dispute benefit in that year dropped to 3s. 8d. per head, and that working expenses increased to 6s. per head. The other averages came out about the same. The total expenditure in 1894 was £1,786,980 by 822 trade unions, on behalf of 1,256,832 members. In 1895 and 1896, as the number of persons involved in strikes was less than for the four years preceding, the above averages were little affected, and in 1896 the average dispute expenditure was at its lowest. 1897 is the year of the great engineering dispute, which has exhausted all the available benefit funds of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and has impoverished many smaller societies; the aggregate dispute benefit has consequently been enormous, and will, I imagine, average considerably over £1 per unionist (the total number of whom the Board of Trade estimates at $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions).

Hitherto we have not mentioned any alleged effect of an eight-hours day on strikes, because the effect on strikes can only be an indirect result of the effect on wages, and this latter is itself one of the main controversial points of the question. How would an eight-hours day affect wages? Wages would remain the same, or they would be reduced, or they would be increased. If reduced, the workman will bear his fair share of the cost of making the change, and justice to all concerned will be the result of voluntary reduction. But it is quite clear that there are no intentions on the part of the employed generally to accept reduced wages. Quite the contrary. Hence, if wages are increased or unchanged, the employer, and, therefore, the industry itself, suffers. With regard to strikes, then, it is sufficient to show the very slight direct connection with hours of labour by quoting from the Report of the Chief Labour Correspondent of the Board of Trade on the Strikes and Lock-outs of 1893. "Strikes as to working hours

have been so few in number and importance as to hardly call for notice. It is sufficient to point out that there have been only 10 strikes during the year"—out of a total of 782 strikes affecting 636,386 persons—"in which the question of working hours was involved, and only 1,191 persons were affected by them. As measured by numbers of persons, the strikes were in the majority of cases successful, only 66 persons being concerned in those partially or not at all successful."

The Report for 1894 says: "Questions as to hours of labour have not caused much trouble during the year, although there were 23 disputes arising therefrom.....involving 6,105 persons." The total of 1,061 strikes during the year affected 324,245 persons, in 3,713 establishments.

In 1895, out of 876 disputes affecting 263,758 workpeople, only 12 (affecting 2,858 persons) were on hours of labour, and these were, "as a rule, unsuccessful in the case of demands for reduction of hours, but successful in the case of resistance to extension of hours."

In 1896, out of 1,021 disputes affecting 198,687 workpeople, "the question of hours of labour was the principal cause of only 26 disputes, affecting 3,658 workpeople, though the question of hours entered in a minor degree into many disputes classed under the head of wages."

Reverting to the attitude of trade unions, the eight-hours question has for some years past formed one of the chief subjects for discussion at the annual Trade Union Congress, and the opinions of delegates have been taken by voting. The following table shows the result of the voting at seven of the last eight Congresses:—

Congress held at	Year	Number of votes for Legislative Intervention.	Number of votes agst. Legislative Intervention.	Number of Delegates not Voting.	Total Number of Delegates.
Liverpool ...	1890	193	155	109	457
Newcastle ...	1891	285	183	84	552
Glasgow ...	1892	205	155	135	495
Belfast ...	1893	97	18	265	380
Norwich ...	1894	240	20	118	378
Cardiff ...	1895	182	50	98	330
Edinburgh ...	1896	211	34	98	343

From this table it would appear that, although the actual

number of votes against legislative intervention has been much diminished during the four years 1893-1896, the proportion of delegates who remain neutral on the question and refrain from voting has for the last three years remained constant at 30 per cent.

At the Trade Union Congress held at Birmingham in September, 1897, 381 delegates attended as representing, it is claimed, 1,093,191 workers. The following resolution was proposed :—

“ Seeing that the eight-hours working day is one of the most important preliminary steps towards the ultimate emancipation of the working class, and will lessen the number of unemployed, improve the quality of work, and increase the health, strength, and intelligence of the workers, this Congress declares that the time has arrived when the hours of labour should be limited to eight per day in all trades and occupations in the United Kingdom, and that the Parliamentary Committee be instructed to draft a Bill on the lines of this resolution, with a view of getting it passed through Parliament.”

It was declared that for the motion—*i.e.*, favouring legislation—923,000 votes were recorded, as opposed to 141,000 against.

The Congress also passed, without opposition, the resolutions :—

“ That this Congress is of opinion that the total abolition of overtime on new work should have the immediate attention of the Parliamentary Committee, with a view to legislative effort for such abolition ; and, pending this, it be a recommendation to all societies affiliated with Congress to by all means possible restrict or abolish overtime in their respective trades.”

“ That it be an instruction to the Parliamentary Committee to introduce a Bill limiting the hours of work in bakehouses in Scotland to eight per day.”

“ That this Congress hereby approves of the Forty-eight Hours Bakehouses Bill, 1897,’ etc.

The only alternative to State regulation is trade-union regulation, and this has been already attempted (with, to the workers, disastrous results) in many cases—*e.g.*, in the engineering and shipbuilding trades. Mr. Webb contends—and in this contention we agree with him—that it is inexpedient to leave

matters solely in the hands of trade unions, (1) because their action is more effective among well-organized workers than among less fortunate ones, who need help the most; (2) because trade-union methods generally involve an expensive strike, which, even if successful, leaves no guarantee that the advantages gained in good times will not be taken away in succeeding periods of depression; and (3) because such regulation excludes the public from a voice in the matter. Mr. Webb argues, therefore, that an Act of Parliament is the only method by means of which the latter can express their consent to be so taxed. But here in the argument we part company with Mr. Webb. We object to a universal *regulation* of hours at all, but offer as an alternative to regulation, either State or trade union, voluntary negotiation and mutual *arrangement*.

Mr. Webb's actual words are worth quoting :—

"We thus see that even those unions which were powerful enough, under a happy conjunction of economic conditions, to win a nominal nine-hours day are not powerful enough to make that nominal gain a reality. They cannot be relied upon to win an effective eight-hours day. In some cases, possibly, they might be successful in substituting the figure 8 for the figure 9, just as in 1873 they substituted 9 for 10. But this substitute, unless accompanied by strict provisions against habitual overtime, is hardly worth struggling for. It would merely amount, in the majority of cases, to a slight gain in money wages, and still leave untouched all the physical, intellectual, and social evils that flow from protracted hours of labour."

And again :—

"A trade union can effectively assert the will of the majority only by means of a strike. A strike involves loss of wages and physical and mental suffering to the striker, semi-starvation to his family, and the loss of the comforts and luxuries that labour and love have gathered within the home. To the tradesmen of the district it involves loss of custom, the accumulation of credit, and, in not a few cases, bankruptcy. To the employer it means, in the first place, the cessation of a mechanism by which he earns his living and provides for his family; in the second place, it

necessitates a purely profitless outlay in order to keep that mechanism, whatever it may be, ready for future use ; and, thirdly, it involves, as a rule, considerable expense in order to start work again.

" Finally, to the general public a strike means the interruption of the ordinary working of the machinery of society—an interruption which would, in some cases, be absolutely unendurable, and in all cases must entail serious personal and pecuniary troubles to thousands of individuals who are powerless to control the cause of that interruption. Trade-union action is, in fact, anti-social in proportion as it is powerful, and endurable only when it is not effective. On these grounds we suggest that trade-union action is an objectionable method of obtaining the eight-hours day, even in cases where it might possibly prove successful. But, as we have already shown, these cases are rare."

Mr. Mather, M.P., whose experiment is mentioned in section viii., thus, in a great measure, expresses the contrary views :—

" The cry for legislation to settle the conflict between the natural and laudable aspirations of working men and the fears and doubts of employers is a danger to the whole field of industry. Mutual responsibility and mutual benefits can only be secured by mutual arrangements. A rigid law passed by members of an Imperial Legislature whose votes are often given haphazard, or for party reasons, or for ' a safe seat,' can never provide a remedy for such conflicts as those which arise in the industrial world in connection with complex questions of wages and hours of labour. There are, of course, simple questions of protecting some work-people in dangerous employments or unhealthy occupations, which may require the State to assume the responsibility of prescribing the limit of hours per day during which adult men may be exposed to such conditions.....But the great manufacturing industries of the country, as a whole, if they are to be secure and prosperous, must be conducted by arrangements mutually planned and carried out by the trade unions and the employers.....Surely such a mode of dealing with this important question can be universally adopted in all trades. The peculiarities of each can thus be specially

met, while the continuity of industrial development and success is secured."

But with regard to Mr. Mather's reference to trade unions we wish to add one word of caution. We acknowledge that when the trade unions are really representative, and embrace all the workers in a particular firm, the employer may just as well treat with trade-union officials, if only on grounds of expediency and convenience, provided they are disinterested and honest working men. In cases where dealing with trade unions does not involve a neglect of unorganized labour, or a strike, of even small extent, by all means let employers deal with trade unions. However great the antipathy to the "new," and would-be almighty, trade unionists, the influence, and in many ways the usefulness, of trade unions, when viewed from the standpoint of their proper sphere—that is, when considered as friendly, beneficent, and provident societies—cannot be disregarded. Where the danger lies is in accepting the blatant self-assertion of the "labour leader"; in recognising such a self-constituted egoist, who speaks of "my Society," as the representative of a body of honest workmen; in dealing with other than a legally responsible committee, really representative of the interests involved; and in neglecting the claims of the greater number of the industrial population, the "free" labourers, the independent unorganized.

In view of the fact that, according to the latest statistics, there were in 1897 in existence 466 associations of employers in the United Kingdom, a universal recognition of the liberty and rights of organized labour can no longer be justly withheld by employers; but there is a serious danger that the liberties and rights of the voiceless majority of workers may be completely overlooked, while the employers and their associations are engaged in combating the abuses of trade unionism, and in teaching the more advanced workmen to comprehend, and to make a rational limit to, their demands.

X.—THE LABOUR COMMISSION MINORITY REPORT.

A SPECIFIC proposal for legislation to limit hours of labour has been made by four of the trade-union representatives who served on the Labour Commission, and embodied in a minority

report. This report acknowledges, as one of the reforms at which it aims, "the securing by appropriate law of an eight-hours day for every manual worker." A first recommendation is that "eight hours should be at once prescribed by an Order in Council as the normal maximum working day in all Government departments. The practice of working overtime should, by the same order, be strictly limited to cases of special emergency, to be certified in each instance by the minister responsible to Parliament for the department, and published in the *London Gazette*." These four Commissioners also think that it would be desirable to embody in an Act of Parliament corresponding provisions with regard to all persons in the service of local governing bodies in the United Kingdom. Next follows definite mention of certain industries to which the signatories consider a legal eight-hours day can be almost immediately applied—viz., railways, coal mines, textile factories, shops, tramways. Finally is given the detailed recommendation of a "development of the system of Administrative or Provisional Orders, by which so large a part of modern legislation is effected. An Eight-Hours Act should be passed, laying down the principle of a maximum working day, and authorizing its application to particular industries, after due inquiry, by Orders similar either to those made under the Factory and Workshop Acts, or to the Provisional Orders laid before Parliament on other subjects.

"Under such an Act the Home Secretary, pending the creation of a Minister for Labour, might be empowered to direct inquiry to be made into the hours of labour of an industry, when called upon to do so by a resolution of either House of Parliament, or of any town or county council, or by the trade council of any town in which the industry was carried on, or by any registered trade union or employers' association in the trade concerned. The Home Secretary would appoint, for the purpose of the inquiry, a commission of three or four experts, with full powers of investigation, both of the circumstances of the industry and the wishes of those engaged in it, whether employers or employed. At the conclusion of its inquiry the Commission would report—(a) what were the facts as to the hours of labour; (b) what appeared to be the predominant opinion among the members of the trade as to the regulation by law of their working hours; (c) what

regulation of the working hours, if any, was desirable, including the arrangement of the working day or week, the provision to be made for emergencies, seasons, etc.; (*d*) precisely to what trade or group of allied trades the regulation should extend; and (*e*) whether the case was one in which the regulation of the hours of labour could be more suitably remitted to the local authorities of the districts in which the industry was carried on. Upon receipt of the report, the Home Secretary would, if he deemed it advisable, issue an Order, either prescribing such a regulation of the maximum hours of labour, with such provisions for emergencies, seasons, etc., as might be required for the trade, or else conferring upon town or county councils, in particular districts, the power of regulating the hours of labour within limits specified by the Order. The Order of either kind may be required to be laid before Parliament, and, after the lapse of forty days, would become law, unless either House, before the expiration of that time, presented an address against the Order, or any part thereof. In this way we believe that it would be possible promptly to secure an eight-hours day for all manual workers, with a due regard for the circumstances of each trade and the interests of the whole community, and without seriously encroaching upon the time of Parliament."

This proposal certainly does not appear very feasible; but, when compared with the greater number of the other proposals made in this same report, it can only be described as extremely moderate. A brief examination of some main features will probably be all that is necessary to expose the impractical nature of the scheme.

First, with regard to the recommendation of an inquiry. A committee of inquiry is to be called into existence by the mere formal asking for it. The committee will be at full liberty to draw from Government finances, and to expend, after the inexperienced and wasteful manner of committees, practically any sum it likes for the discussion, in the usual languid fashion, of a most vital question—one which, in many cases, affects the life of an industry. The valuable time of trade experts, business men, large capitalists, and brain workers in general is to be at the disposal of a committee created on the demand of a town council! of a trade council! of

a trade union! of an employers' association! But it is hardly likely that much trouble will be occasioned by the demands of the latter. Employers' associations are chiefly defensive, and formed to check, by wise measures, or, at least, by reasonable actions, the egregious attitude of the new trade unions.

It must be mentioned, however, that the adoption of this proposal would involve the legal recognition of trade unions and employers' associations. It seems to us that the time has come when this measure cannot long be delayed, but it is a very serious step, and one in itself requiring full consideration. The legal recognition, of which we would approve, must be granted in such a way that equal rights are left to those who do not desire to delegate the making of their labour contracts to a more or less representative body. In other words, only recognition, not protection, is what we desire for trade unions. At present the only responsible labour legally recognised as such is free labour. Trade unionism is simply in its essence a contracting-out to avoid the legally-recognised individual responsibility. We strongly uphold the principle of contracting-out, and, therefore, the right to combine; but we still more strongly uphold the right of every individual to exercise his own judgment, and to choose whether or not he shall contract-out and combine, or rely upon his discretion and independence.

Next, as to the composition of the committee—a commission of three or four experts. What are to be the qualifications of an expert, and what his connection with the trade? It is not probable that the nomination of three or four men by a Home Secretary would be satisfactory to the whole of a trade. Suppose the committee to consist of three and the Home Secretary; objection would be raised by the employed if they are represented by one only of the three. Supposing the committee to consist of four—two duly-accepted representative employers, and two duly-accepted representative employees, and the Home Secretary with a casting vote. The Home Secretary might just as well give his decision without the aid of his committee. The cases of attempted arbitrations in the boot and shoe industry—and, indeed, in the majority of large strikes—show that a deadlock must result from equal representation. Agreement will be impossible. The composition and report of the Labour Commission is proof positive. For all the effect of the huge unparalleled inquiry conducted by the Commission upon the individual opinions of the Commis-

sioners, the various reports embodied in its final volume might just as well have been issued as its first volume.

Thirdly, as to full powers of investigation. This is a charmingly official phrase ; for all the practical value it possesses, for its graceful absurdity, for its smooth glibness, it might have emanated from the suave President of the Board of Trade himself. Every commission, as a matter of fact, nominally possesses these "full powers of investigation"; but they are understood to be *ultra vires*, and no commission ever yet attempted to put them into execution. It would have been very amusing to watch the Labour Commission taking legal proceedings to extract from the officials of the Miners' Federation their views on the Labour Question. If, in the case of a Parliamentary Committee such as this proposal contemplates, it should be attempted, public opinion would not permit the direful penalties of fine or imprisonment attached to this treason of disobedience. It is the inalienable right of the individual to speak or to hold his tongue. Modern committees cannot be endowed as mediæval inquisitions.

Finally, as to the heads under which the commission is to report:—"*(a) What were the facts as to the hours of labour.*" In this we suggest the addition of these words: "So far as the commission has been able to obtain reliable information." This will give the commission a loophole for excuse when the impartiality, the completeness, or the accuracy of its facts is questioned. The experts can reply: "Our facts are strictly official; we have repeated what we have been told."

"*(b) What appeared to be the predominant opinion among the members of the trade as to the regulation by law of their working hours.*" The majority of the employed, the free labourers, must certainly be represented in the constitution of the commission, and full means taken to secure a true representation. There is a task laid upon the State! By Governmental agency unorganized labour is to be represented, and, therefore, in a degree, organized. There should be a good opening here for some of those unemployed "labour leaders" who were stranded by the wave of disgust which passed over the country before the last General Election, but which, alas, has continued its roll ever since.

"*(c) What regulation of the working hours, if any, was desirable, including the arrangement of the working day or week, the provision to be made for emergencies, seasons, etc.*" We have only space to remark that the reported number of alternative

desirable regulations, arrangements, and provisions will vary directly as the number of commissioners *plus* one for the Home Secretary.

"(d) *Precisely to what trade or group of allied trades the regulation should extend.*" *Ignotum per ignotius.* Confusion worse confounded. To define the undefinable.

This particular proposal, in short, seems to us to unite the evils both of trade option and of local option methods of applying a legal eight-hours day. It embodies, either definitely or inferentially, the main points of difficulty contained in every scheme yet put forward; and it bases its arguments, from its very first specific proposal, on a purely ideal estimate of human nature, character, and capacity.

XI.—CASES OF SOME SPECIAL INDUSTRIES CONSIDERED.

HITHERTO our remarks on the eight-hours day have applied to the general aspect of the question, and, with the exception of the typical instances detailed in section viii., have expressly excluded more than a passing reference to particular industries. We now propose very briefly to look more carefully into the special conditions attaching to certain important industries, and to see how far it may be possible and practicable to apply proposals for an eight-hours working day, and how far such proposals are valid or justified.

I. AGRICULTURE AND FISHING; DOMESTIC SERVICE; EMPLOYMENT OF SEAMEN.

Before considering the trades in which definite and more or less practical proposals have been made, it is desirable to give a few reasons why, in preceding sections, we stated that certain industries and occupations could not possibly work an eight-hours day, and that these cases were too absurd for serious discussion. In agricultural occupations, fishing, and domestic service, alone, a total of 4,868,386 persons are engaged, representing 30 per cent. of the total occupied persons of all ages (16,543,233) of the United Kingdom. As regards seamen, we can only say that the number employed in British registered vessels in 1895 was 239,612. With regard to *Agriculture*, which affords occupation to some 2,461,048 persons, in England, the hours of actual work and the hours of an ordinary

agricultural labourer's absence from his home vary considerably. The former range from eight and a-half to twelve hours, the latter from ten to thirteen and a-half hours, in spring, summer, and autumn, the approximate average working time being ten hours. This working time is, however, extended in cases where the labourers have a considerable distance to walk to their homes. Men in charge of stock have generally longer hours than ordinary labourers. In the winter time, or for about three months, the hours of the ordinary labourers are generally only from light to dark, but in hay-time and in harvest work is much prolonged, and it would be fair to reckon that the overtime during these busy periods would make up for the shorter hours of winter. The Assistant Agricultural Labour Commissioners did not report any demand or expression of a desire on the part of the labourers for a compulsory shortening of the hours of labour in agricultural work; and, indeed, those hours do not seem to have been generally the subject of serious complaint. Mr. Mann, in his evidence before the Labour Commission, stated his belief that regulating the working hours of the farm labourers would remedy the present irregularity of employment caused by the influx of the agricultural labourers into towns. He acknowledges, however, that in the application of an Act compelling municipal and county authorities to limit the hours to forty-eight per week, or less, in any trade within their jurisdiction where a three-fourths majority of the adult workers of either sex demanded it, an exception should be made for harvest-time. We say that at other seasons also, such as at sowing-time, requiring special atmospheric conditions; at turnip-hoeing, requiring dry weather; and at lambing-time, when shepherds spend many hours of the night in attending to the sheep, exceptions must be made. Again, Mr. Mann states that the present condition of agriculture affords a conspicuous object-lesson of the failure of sectional control. It is difficult to understand how the State will successfully "nationalize" the agricultural industry if, as the "collectivists" desire, its inaugural act of grace will consist of tyranny—the tyranny of insisting on a farmer watching the floods sweeping away his haystacks, and seeing his calving cows and littering swine dying for want of attention, simply because he himself possesses but one pair of hands and the strength of one man, and because his men—well, as regards his men, the State, in Mr. Mann's rhetoric, is engaged in turning "into more profitable channels the energy formerly expended

in fighting against nature and bolstering up decaying industries."

But Mr. Hyndman, the representative of the extreme socialists, who want legislation for a universal maximum eight-hours day, in reply to the question, "Do you apply the eight-hours to agriculture?" says: "Yes, except in cases of unavoidable necessity, such as getting in crops when rain was threatening, or cases of that kind."

And Mr. Webb says:—

"In agriculture, for example, such strictness (absolute prohibition of overtime) would be fatal. There are many agricultural operations which must be done promptly, or not at all. Fruit must be picked when it is ready, or it will rot; the proverbial hay must be made while the sun shines; and the corn must be harvested before it begins to spoil. In such cases as these a rigid eight-hours day would be absolutely inapplicable."

The Auer motion itself, which formulates the demand for an eight-hours day in the most comprehensive manner, admits of a specially-regulated extension only to agricultural industry and forestry. These contradictions are typically socialist, and incline one to ask: "What, then, is all the socialist fuss about?"

Fishing, too, is chiefly a seasonal occupation. The 1891 census gives 65,642 persons occupied in the industry. In the fishing industry on the East Coast it is stated there are some 2,000 men who work on the profit-sharing system, which is regarded by the trade as the only remunerative method. There are no fixed hours of labour, and the hours worked, especially in steam fishing-boats, are alleged to be excessive. In these boats, it is said, the men work on an average fifteen hours a day for seven days a week, and the work is very hard and monotonous as well as dangerous. In spite of this, it was stated before the Labour Commission, on behalf of the National Federation of Fishermen, that the men in the North Sea would prefer longer periods of rest on shore to a reduction of hours of labour at sea, which they consider hardly practicable.

It may here be mentioned that the coopers' trade is often dependent upon some other industry, the fluctuation of which affects the coopers directly. For instance, at Hull it depends upon the oil trade, and on the east and west coasts of Scotland

upon the fishing. These facts are arguments in themselves. Certainly, if it were possible to obtain a more even method of working in the fishing industry, the coopers and the fishermen would do their utmost to bring it about voluntarily. In occupations of this nature, if the trades themselves cannot arrange their hours with perfect satisfaction, how can the State arrange for them?

Domestic Service is the typical instance of the "living in" system. The census of 1891 showed that 2,341,696 persons were engaged in domestic offices or services. The servant receives, in addition to wages, board, lodging, and sometimes clothing. Complaints as to long hours worked by domestic servants were received by the Labour Commission; but, unless domestic service itself is totally abolished—that is, unless all servants sleep off the premises and only come to work at fixed hours, and unless all other attendant present conditions, such as the above-mentioned allowances, are swept away, no State regulation of hours is possible. The treatment of the domestics is a matter for each employer in his individual capacity to settle. The absolute absurdity of State interference is obvious. Do the eight-hours advocates demand State fixing of family meal times and inspection of all domestic arrangements? Do they wish to re-introduce Curfew?

The following is a summary of some ridiculous evidence given before the Labour Commission by Mr. G. W. Greenman, member of the Social Democratic Federation, who had initiated the London Domestic Servants' Union, which then included some 700 members: "As a remedy for the present long hours, which were stated to average eighteen per day, the witness advocated that the day's work of domestic servants should be restricted by law to eight hours. Eight consecutive hours would be preferable; but, if this were found impracticable, the duties might be so distributed that each servant should work only eight hours altogether during the day. If a parlour-maid could not be in attendance at breakfast and at supper without working more than eight hours, two parlour-maids must be kept. The witness complained that the custom of living in flats tended to decrease the number of servants employed, and that numbers of people who used to keep large households in England now live more cheaply on the continent, but did not see that his proposal, which increased the cost of housekeeping, would also increase both these tendencies, and consequently add to the number of the

unemployed. An Eight-Hours Act which included domestic servants would be enforced by means of the labour exchange which the witness hoped to see established. Servants engaged through the exchange would be subject to certain rules, and if these were broken by the employer, 'the servant would go to his labour exchange, and have all grievances rectified.' The witness was of opinion that servants would be ready to report infringements of their rules, although he admitted that in occupations already regulated by law a similar readiness did not exist. He did not wish the law to interfere in households where the domestic work was done by the owner's wife and daughters. It was only where work was carried on for wages that restrictions were necessary. The eight-hours system had not yet been adopted by any of the employers who were favourable to the Union; but the witness promised to suggest it to them." After this evidence is any further argument required?

The standard hours in *Sea Service* are twelve a day, in four-hour watches, and it is stated that, as a rule, only six hours are occupied with the actual work of the ship, the men during the remainder of the time being merely on duty. The official holidays are given, with payment, and on Sundays there is no work except the manœuvring of the vessel. A witness before the Labour Commission, however, denied that the daily work on board ship occupied only six hours, and stated that the amount of Sunday work was very considerable. The hours, he said, are four on and four off; but, as the time from 4 to 8 p.m. is divided into two watches of two hours each, called "dog watches," the hours vary from ten to fourteen a day. They are necessarily unfixed, being subject to the exigencies of the service. Other witnesses calculated the average at 72 or 80 hours a week, and at 106 or 107. Judging between the various statements, these estimates appear to be excessive; but, whether strictly accurate or not, it is quite clear that the seaman is not employed in actual, physical, continuous work for this period of time. In these cases no distinction seems to have been drawn between actual work and methods of passing away the time. Such work as steering, looking out, turning yards round, hoisting, setting and lowering sails, is not continuous; and, as Mr. G. A. Laws says, "the greater part of the time on duty he (the seaman) is smoking his pipe on the fore-castle deck or promenading the deck, the same as he would be in his garden if he were at home; it is not work, it is merely exercise, and no more.'

Firemen have shorter hours, generally eight hours a day, four on and eight off ; but in some of the smaller vessels the rule is four hours on and four off. On a few vessels belonging to one firm the firemen have a six-hours day, and it is stated that quicker passages are made in consequence of the reduced hours. Firemen work a certain amount of overtime, through having miscellaneous duties to perform ; and thus the average hours of those on an eight-hours shift are said to be ten a day.

Again, before the Labour Commission, representatives of the National Amalgamated Sailors and Firemen's Union advocated an eight-hours day for all seamen, maintaining that there is no more difficulty in applying it to sailors than to sea-going firemen, who have had a customary eight-hours day for many years, and that any work in excess of eight hours a day is injurious to health. Representatives of the North of England Sailors and Firemen's Union expressed the same opinion, and added that the reduction of hours would diminish the loss of life at sea by causing more men to be employed and a better look-out to be kept. It was stated that the reduction of hours in the case of firemen had resulted in increased efficiency, and that the same result might be expected in the case of sailors.

It was pointed out by several witnesses that hours of labour at sea must depend on the requirements of the service, and that to limit the discretion of officers in this respect by a definite restriction would be to subvert discipline and endanger life and property.

Again, it was stated by a representative of the North of England Sailors and Firemen's Union that, unless an adequate manning scale were first enforced by law, the establishment of a legal eight-hours day would increase the dangers of sea service, and also that legislation is unnecessary, since a reduction of hours can be brought about by the action of trade unions, as in the case of firemen. The National Amalgamated Sailors and Firemen's Union advocated a legal eight-hours day on the ground that to demand reduction of hours by trade-union methods would lead to continual strikes, and a concession gained in that manner would be easily lost. It is proposed that an Eight-Hours Act should allow overtime to be worked at sea in case of necessity, of which necessity the captain must be the judge.

Several other ardent advocates of an eight-hours day for seamen agree that at present such a measure must be delayed

until a manning-scale is established ; but they appear to be divided on the question of the effect upon the number employed, and cannot be made to see that a vessel would be obliged to carry an unnecessary number of hands.

No reference to hours of labour of seamen occurs in the Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854-90 ; nor, so far as we are aware, have any amendments empowering the Board of Trade to deal with hours of labour been made.

The trade disputes which have arisen so frequently of late years in the shipping trade have mostly been due to questions of principle, such as that of working with non-unionists, or of supporting the position of a federated organization. Very few have been directly concerned with questions of hours. Those employed in the sea service appear to be satisfied with the conditions of labour, and do not desire reduced hours.

To sum up, we say with Lord Farrer that in at least three branches of labour—men employed on board ship, farm labour, and domestic service—a strict eight-hours day would be simply out of the question.

COAL MINING.

In the United Kingdom there were 692,684 persons employed in 1896 in or about coal mines : comprising half a million men and boys employed underground, two-thirds of whom are "getters." From time to time proposals have been made to apply a fixed eight-hours day to the mining industry, and these culminated in the withdrawal after reference to Committee of the Mines (Eight Hours) Bill in August, 1895, and in the dropping, before second reading, of the same Bill reintroduced in 1896, and in its crushing defeat by 227 votes to 186 at the second reading, May 5th, 1897. It is worthy of notice that the Parliamentary Committee of the last Trade Union Congress regards this defeat as "a serious blow at the general policy of the Congress in respect to a legislative eight-hours day"; and that at Birmingham in 1897 the Congress unanimously resolved "That this Congress instruct the Parliamentary Committee to assist the miners at the opening of Parliament next year in getting as many members to ballot for the Mines (Eight Hours) Bill as possible, and when the Bill is down for second reading the Parliamentary Committee assist the Miners' Federation in whipping up members to attend the House of Commons in support of the Bill." The Bill, which has been regularly

promoted and rejected for several years prior to 1895, proposes to enact that "a person shall not, in any one day of twenty-four hours, be employed underground in any mine for a period exceeding eight hours from the time of his leaving the surface of the ground to the time of his ascent thereto, except in case of accident"; and makes the employer, or his agent, and not the workman, liable to penalty for contravention of this enactment.

Again, the Coal Mines Regulation Bill proposes to enact that "No person under the age of twenty-one years shall be employed in, or allowed to be for the purposes of employment in, any mine below ground for more than eight hours during any consecutive twenty-four hours."

By far the larger proportion of workers in and about mines consists of adult labour, and it is urged that for these no protective legislation is necessary. The main justification of the Factory Acts, or part of them at least, is that they protect the helpless workers—the women and children, who, without legislative help, are unable to obtain just and fair conditions of labour. The extension of the principle to adult male workers cannot but have an evil result.

In illustration of the connection between the nature of the work and the length of hours in coal mines, it may be stated that in Durham the "hewers" and "stonemen," who perform the most laborious work in the mines, work seven and eight hours per day respectively. The boys who sit on the shafts or "limmers" have comparatively light work (their hours vary from ten to twelve), and the men who work twelve hours have little to do beyond watching the "fan" and "ventilating engines."

The hours of labour in mines have been reduced considerably by voluntary effort in late years. Thus, in Northumberland, between 1850 and 1890, the hours of hewers appear to have been reduced from sixty-six to forty-four hours a week, and the hours of boys from seventy-two to sixty-six or sixty. The short hours of hewers in this district are said to be dependent on the double-shift system, which was brought about by the different method of working the mine. The "wedge" system required two men working together; the "blasting" system requires only one man to be at the coal-face at a time. The hours of mechanics in Durham have also been reduced in this same period by thirteen and a half hours a week. In Derbyshire the hours of "miners generally"

have been reduced by fourteen and a half hours a week ; in the Wigan district, by six to twelve hours ; in Staffordshire (Burslem), by eleven hours ; in the Burnley district, by twenty hours ; and in the Barnsley and Normanton district, by eighteen hours. A similar reduction has taken place in other districts.

The chief economic arguments of the workers are contained in the evidence of the representative of the Lanarkshire miners, which, on this point, may be summarized thus : The employers conceive that the more trade they do the more they will make, whereas the opposite is the case. A smaller output would give a better price, better wages, and higher profits. And it is now common knowledge that we are depleting the country of minerals, and, by and by, we shall run short. But matters could be adjusted by the workmen limiting the supply, and producing for home consumption instead of for foreign competition.

The main body of miners act up to their professions. It appears from the evidence before the Labour Commission relating to the South Wales coalfield that they frequently absent themselves from work in order to prevent coal becoming too plentiful ; and the representative of the miners in the West of Scotland district said : " In 1886 the stronger men voluntarily limited their labour to the production of half-a-crown's worth of coal a day, in order to carry out the principle of an eight-hours day, and to raise the rate of wages. No longer being able to expand the productive power of their hands so as to supply exceptional demands, the employers were prevented from accepting specially large orders and lowering their prices in order to obtain them. Prices, indeed, were not only maintained, but raised, and a corresponding increase in the rate of wages was the result." The evidence was afterwards confirmed by the representative of the coal owners in the same district.

But the benefit of better natural conditions enabling America to work the coal so much more cheaply than in England must inevitably lead to American competition in coal production, especially if selling prices are advanced. Even now coal is sent from Australia and used in Liverpool. According to Professor Percy, more than half of the 200,000,000 tons of coal produced each year in this country is consumed in manufactures, the bulk of which have to compete in foreign markets with foreign goods. Hence any permanent increase other than

market fluctuations in the selling price of coal will seriously affect the iron and steel and cotton industries.

In addition to the economic and other arguments of general application mentioned in preceding sections, two arguments peculiar to the miners' case are urged: (1) That reduced hours would probably result in a decrease in the number of accidents, which, it is alleged, occur chiefly during the later hours of the shift. This argument, however, is not borne out by statistics, which show that, in the ten years from 1881-92, in coal mines during the first four hours 125 fatal explosions have taken place, but only 80 after the fourth hour. The total number of deaths in the first period of the shift was 1,202, and in the latter period 744. With regard to accidents from falls of roofs and sides, the general experience of mining engineers is that the greater number occur during the first two or three hours of the shift. Apart, however, from the statement that the number of accidents in mines is not causally connected with the present length of hours, it is urged that, under a legal eight-hours day, the safety of the mine would be endangered by the attempt to obtain the same output in the shorter time, because the men would be tempted to hurry over their work and neglect to examine their working places carefully. Moreover, unless the double-shift system were adopted, the faces would travel more slowly, in consequence of the loss of working power in the pit, and would, therefore, be more liable to be broken and crushed. Finally, the reduction in hours might also lead to winding the men out of the mine at greater speed, which would increase the danger of the operation. (2) That reduced hours are necessary on account of the particularly unhealthy, dangerous, and laborious nature of the work, and of the extreme discomfort of working conditions. With regard to this, it does not appear that coal-mining is an unhealthy occupation, even when allowance is made for the probability that weakly men either avoid entering such an occupation or soon abandon it. Dr. Ogle states that coal miners are one of the healthiest sets of men in all the trades that he has examined. The death-rate of coal miners in every county in which he has examined is lower than the death-rate of males of corresponding ages in the rest of the county, or of the whole county including them. He also states that "the death-rates of coal miners are surprisingly low. In spite of their terrible liability to accident, and their constant exposure to an atmosphere vitiated by coal-dust, by foul air, and by an excessively high temperature, the

comparatively mortality of these labourers is considerably below that of all males." This low death-rate is possibly accounted for by the fact that the conditions under which coal miners work are invariably constant. The miners are protected against all changes of weather, and work under an equable temperature all the year round. With regard to the danger, laboriousness, and discomfort attending the work, it is shown by statistics that coal-mining is much safer than many surface employments; in the years 1893, 1894, 1895, and 1896 the numbers of fatal accidents per 1,000 employed (underground workers) were 1.552, 1.598, 1.488, and 1.480 respectively. Further, with the exception of the coal hewer, the work is much lighter than that of quarry-men, agricultural labourers, or almost any other class of rough surface labour, while it is by no means so incessant; and, beyond the fact that the occupation of a miner involves a daily bath, and very occasional working (for hewers only) in a wet seam, the workers are, in reality, infinitely more comfortable than those in many other employments.

In addition to the above replies to the arguments of the eight-hours movement supporters, it is stated that a legal eight-hours day ignores the variations in strain involved in different occupations, and prevents the men from making up for shorter hours in slack times by longer hours in good times. It would be unjust to the slow workers, because it would throw out of employment the men with the least advantages of strength and skill.

Three alleged practical methods of working a legal eight-hours day have been suggested: one uniform eight-hour shift for all workers, including boys; a double shift of eight hours for men and boys; three shifts of hewers and two of boys. (1) The first would involve a reduction of about thirty per cent. in the number of hewers, and an increase of an hour and a half in their day's work. The period of coal drawing would be limited to six and a half hours. The expenses of the collieries would be increased so much that they could not compete with other districts. (2) The second method, a double shift of eight hours, would involve a double output. This difficulty could be removed in certain districts by the restriction of the area worked. The safety of the mine would, however, be endangered under this system. In the first place, the repairing work done in the period intervening between the two shifts would not give the mine time to

equally material and obvious reasons. No amount of legislation can change natural conditions.

On the whole, however, there is also a good deal of uniformity in the hours of dock labour in different districts. The most usual working day appears to be ten hours in summer and eight in winter, with time allowed for meals. Where it extends to twelve hours the meal time is generally longer.

The great difficulty of the docks is connected not so much with the employed as with the unemployed. The tendency is for all the idle loafers, and all the unemployed of the unskilled labouring classes, thrown out of work by their own strikes, inefficiency, or laziness, to drift to the docks.

Mr. Charles Booth has outlined a scheme to diminish the evils of irregular and casual dock work, into which it is unnecessary to go. It is worth noting that Mr. Booth estimates the number of permanent men (dockers) required at 16,000, as compared with over 22,000 regularly competing, and that he expressly deprecates legislative interference in the matter.

Since the 1890 dock strike the companies have successfully attempted a better organization of labour. For instance, the London and St. Katherine's Dock now employs 3,500 permanent men—1,600 on the first list (weekly labourers), and 1,900 on the second list (preference men). The remaining work performed by casual labour has been reduced from thirty to forty per cent. to an average of six and a half per cent. It is impossible to wholly eliminate the casual element, on account of the varying demand for labour caused by disturbances in the field of work which are quite beyond the Company's control or calculation. The "wool sales," for instance, may one day need the employment of 2,500 extra hands, while on another only fifteen casual men may be required. Again, the irregular arrival of ships at all times of the day and of the year makes it necessary that the trade should be under the most elastic conditions.

It is chiefly in connection with the conditions of labour in the port of London that the question has arisen of the application of an eight-hours day to this industry. The normal day's work in the docks is about eight hours, and it is proposed that this or a proportionate weekly number should be the prescribed maximum.

A novel argument used against the short hours system is that many who have had experience of the system of short hours and hard work in American ports consider it more

physically trying than the opposite practice. It is further maintained that the amount of overtime usually worked in the London docks and wharves—namely, about two or three hours—could not be usefully restricted by making the men give place to another set of men, because this practice would increase the chances of casual labour men, and thus maintain the very class of labour which it is desired to discourage. It is also stated that the men themselves would object to being turned off a job, and deprived of the opportunity of working overtime at a higher rate.

At annual Congresses of the Dockers' Union the question of the form in which an eight-hours day should be adopted has been discussed, with the result that a large majority are against the proposal for a literal eight-hours day, and in favour of a forty-eight-hours week. It is stated that the adoption of the latter is very generally thought to be practicable, whereas the unavoidable irregularity due to seasonal causes, tides, and weather is a bar to the adoption of the former.

With regard to an actual eight-hours day with two (or three, unless night work is abolished) shifts, it is feared by a foreman at the docks that the shift system would lead to quarrels between the gangs relieving each other. Again, an employer of wharf labour thinks that relays might be very advantageous if the amount of overtime were constant from day to day; but, since it is not, there would be difficulty in equalizing the shifts. An arrangement by which the gangs would overlap, one beginning early and the other ending late, would be unsuited to the nature of wharf work. To employ short gangs for any part of the day would cause the work to be delayed.

IRON AND STEEL TRADES (INCLUDING SHIPBUILDING).

According to 1891 census returns, the numbers employed in the engineering and shipbuilding industries in Great Britain were: Machines and implements, 342,000; ships and boats, 70,517; iron and steel industries, 380,193; total, 792,710. The members of the National Society of Blastfurnacemen and the Amalgamated Society of Enginemen, Firemen, and Boilermen, and the Associated Society of Scotch Millmen, are in favour of an eight-hours day. On the other hand, the great majority of men belonging to the Associated Iron and Steel Workers of Great Britain are strongly against an eight-hours day. The puddlers also offer a steady resistance to the

proposal of their employers to reduce their hours. The Boilermakers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders' Society, all the employers belonging to the Iron Trades Employers' Association, and the Iron Masters of Cleveland (with the modification allowed on p. 59 following) are distinctly opposed to an eight-hours day. The usual arguments, that an eight-hours day would call into demand a large part of the "surplus labour" of the country, would result in moral and physical benefit to the employed, and would involve no appreciable economic loss to the community, are brought forward with special reference to the iron, engineering, and shipbuilding trades.

But the demand for legal limitation of the hours seems more often to arise from the excessive hours consequent on systematic overtime. Apart from the grievance of "systematic overtime," there would be little demand in many industries for a compulsory eight-hours day.

In the boilermakers' and iron and steel shipbuilders' trade it is stated that a legal reduction of hours is unnecessary, because the average hours in shipbuilding yards are now less than eight. The utter impossibility of doing away with all overtime is shown in the case of the repairing branch of the trade. "Perhaps two or three thousand hands are dependent upon the repairing of the boiler for the starting of the engine in the morning." And, again, it is quite impossible to stop a job at a given point. In the words of an employer: "To do away with all overtime would be exceedingly inconvenient, and detrimental to all concerned: to the customer, the employer, and, I think, to the men themselves."

On the question of foreign competition, it will suffice to quote the following figures supplied by the British Iron Trade Association:—Out of a total of 24,404,000 tons of pig-iron produced by the five leading nations in 1890, and 10,273,000 tons in 1870—

	In 1890.	As compared with 1870.
Great Britain produced	32 per cent.	58 per cent.
United States " " " " " "	37 " "	16 " "
Germany " " " " " "	19 " "	11 " "
France " " " " " "	8 " "	9 " "
Belgium " " " " " "	3 " "	5½ " "

With respect to engineering it is claimed that the industry is not developing relatively to the expansion of the world's industries. The increase in value of exports of machinery and engines in 1895 over 1886 was in the United Kingdom 50 per cent.; in the United States, 250; in Belgium, 300; in Germany, 85; in France, 34; in Switzerland, 40; in Sweden, 100.

Again, between the periods 1865-9 (before the 9 hours) and 1870-4 (when the nine-hours system came into operation), the British increase was equal to 65 per cent., but that of Belgium to 125 per cent. As between 1860-4 and 1890-5, Great Britain has increased 250 per cent., and Belgium 400 per cent.

One other point which has some bearing on the present hours is worthy of note. According to tables prepared by Dr. Gritton, when vice-president of the Lord's Day Observance Society, the percentage of Sunday work in the iron and steel trades is 9.13, which, excluding gas-making with 18 per cent., is the largest out of seventeen leading industries. In shipbuilding the percentage is very small.

An experiment in working a forty-eight-hours week has been made by Mr. Allan, a marine-engine builder, Sunderland, who inaugurated a forty-eight-hours rule early in 1892. The daily hours are eight and three-quarters on five days of the week, and four and a quarter on Saturday. No overtime is worked, except in cases of emergency. Between 300 and 400 men are employed. They are all paid by the day. When the shorter hours were introduced Mr. Allan made an arrangement with the men whereby they should accept a five per cent. reduction in wages, to be restored if no loss of production proved to be the result. At the end of six months the five per cent. was restored, there being no loss of production; so that the men now receive as much for the forty-eight hours as they did formerly for the fifty-three hours per week. In fact, the men did not really do more than forty-eight hours per week under the old system. They are now much more punctual, and the improvement in this and other respects, visible at the time of the change, is being steadily maintained. The physical improvement in the workers is especially noticeable in the boys.

An instance of an industry where, by working very long hours, high earnings can be gained by piece-work is the occupation of certain classes of workmen engaged at blast furnaces in the pig-iron trade. In the Cleveland district the furnaces

are worked continuously; until recently the practice was alternate shifts of blastfurnacemen—*i.e.*, the men who superintend the heating of the furnaces—on duty for twelve hours each, and with duty on alternate Sundays. However, as we have stated in section viii., the Cleveland district now works three shifts by a similar arrangement to that holding in blast furnaces in Lancashire and Cumberland, and it is worthy of remark that this scheme, which affected 5,000 men, has, owing to the continuous character of the work, necessitated the employment of about 500 more men. The logical sequence is the demand made early in 1898 for an eight-hours day for all men working day and night shifts, and the masters have consequently appointed a sub-committee to compare existing conditions in Cleveland with those in the Barrow district. This industry, together with the manufactured iron trade, where puddlers—*i.e.*, those who attend to the charging of the furnace with the metal for melting—and millmen—*i.e.*, those employed in the finishing departments—work alternate shifts, is, it is said, eminently adapted by its nature to a general system of three eight-hours shifts, the result of which would also be to somewhat increase the output. Various attempts, however, made by employers to introduce a three-shift system into puddling have failed on account of the resistance of the puddlers themselves (who earn from 6s. to 8s. per shift), the men having a strong objection to what they consider the unreasonable hours of commencing work under the three-shift system. In the mill department there is also a strong objection on the part of the men, who prefer to work the long hours, by which they can earn 20s. a day or more.

The so-called "eight-hours dispute" in the engineering trade is dealt with elsewhere. But it will be convenient to here give the opposing arguments of supporters and combatants. At the Thames Iron Works and Shipbuilding Company's Works, where the system has been in force for over five years, the chairman (Mr. Hills) has submitted the following considerations in favour of the system:—

"The men, having breakfasted before coming to work, lose no time in the break that would otherwise be necessary for that meal.

"The men, not starting work on an empty stomach, commence with greater determination.

"The forty-eight-hours system gives immunity from strikes,

and the perfect contentment, and consequent good behaviour, of the men."

On the other hand, a correspondent, who signs himself "A Twenty Years' Member of the A. S. E.," has made the following objections to the eight-hours system:—

"1. The long absence from food in the early part of the day, breakfasting early, and fasting until noon.

"2. If a man is late out at night on enjoyment, etc., he can now lose a quarter, but under the eight hours he would have to lose the day.

"3. Men working double shift would, by restricting the night shift to forty-eight hours' pay, receive 18s. to 20s. less for the night-shift pay, or a reduction of 8s. to 10s. per week.

"4. By wanting to get as much work done for the forty-eight hours as the fifty-three would harass the life out of a man, and make many shops a perfect pandemonium, as I am assured one shop is since they worked on the forty-eight hours.

"5. When a man gets aged he will most assuredly have to go, to make room for younger and stronger men, in order to produce the absolute maximum.

"6. The proposed three-shift system would fill the shops with more boy labour, and in slack times two shifts of men would be walking about with nothing, or next to nothing, to do."

One point on the importance of machinery must not be overlooked. It is impossible, according to competent authorities, for machines, which do at least seven-tenths of the work, to increase the output, assuming they are at present worked to their full capacity. If, as is alleged in Messrs. Mather and Platt's experiment, the machines do in forty-eight hours what they did in fifty-three hours, the workmen have hitherto not been giving their full output.

TEXTILE TRADES.

With reference to the textile industry, which, according to the census of 1891, then gave employment to 1,465,023 persons, the arguments in favour of an eight-hours day may be briefly summed up as follows: (1) That a restriction of hours, while likely to conduce to the physical and moral welfare of those employed, is especially desirable for the purpose of providing work for the unemployed; although, on the other hand, other advocates assert that the output of the present workers will not be decreased; (2) that it will not reduce wages nor cause trade to suffer from foreign competition, because any increase in the

cost of production may be avoided by improvements in machinery or the improved efficiency of the workers, or, at any rate, it is argued, the increase will not unduly affect wages, since it has not done so in the past ; and (3) that, even if these dangers were incurred, they must be risked, on the ground that reduced hours would mean "the greatest good of the greatest number."

Against an eight-hours day it is urged : (1) That a further reduction is not necessary for the physical and moral well-being of the workers ; (2) that it would inevitably increase the cost of production, and so render English manufacturers unable to compete successfully with their foreign rivals ; and (3) that an arbitrary limitation of hours is inapplicable to trades which are subject to alternating busy and slack periods.

Before the Labour Commission, one advocate of the eight-hours day believed that the curtailment of the hours would reduce the number of paupers, and consequently lower the rates, and that this would counterbalance any economic loss involved. Some other witnesses were asked to explain whether they would advocate a further reduction of hours if, in the course of a few years, "fresh crops of unemployed" had arisen ; but they declined to give any decided opinion on this point, although they considered that it might then be advisable to reduce the hours from eight to seven, or even six. It would, however, be better to try the effect of the eight-hours day first, "and then they would see."

BUILDING TRADES.

The various branches of the building trades, including labourers, probably employ between 1,500,000 and 2,000,000 persons.

The secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners is unable "to see his way clear" to support a general eight-hours day, as it might not be advantageous to trades such as plasterers, bricklayers, and painters, which are subject, more or less, to the severity and inclemency of the weather. The secretary of the Dublin United Trades Council states that "season trades" and "trades of fashion" could not work an equal number of hours in the busy season and in the slack season. Other working bricklayers, house-painters, etc., state that hours are necessarily irregular, and that a uniform regulation is impossible. It is also contended that most of the men would be against the prohibition of overtime, because they need

it in the summer to wipe off the debts incurred in the winter. Again, there is an objection from carpenters and joiners that, owing to importation from foreign countries, where men work longer hours for lower wages, an eight-hours day would not be satisfactory in England unless it were also international. The Amalgamated Society of Coopers also disapprove of an eight-hours day, because they fear they would not be able "to retain the same rate of wages."

Against this, in August, 1897, the National Amalgamated Society of Painters and Decorators, representing, it is said, 7,800 members, and affiliated with the Federation of Ship-building and Engineering Trades (whose vote on the general question of hours is recorded in section xv. later), passed a vote in favour of the eight-hours day. The 17-days' strike of the Edinburgh and Leith stonemasons in the same month was successful in obtaining the reduction demanded—viz., from 51 to 45 hours per week—a change which affected 2,500 work-people, and dated from February 15th, 1898. In December, 1897, the Aberdeen joiners withdrew their demand for an eight-hours day after conference with the employers, who declined to concede the reduction. On January 27th, 1898, the Scottish Building Trades (Employers') Federation resolved to use every effort to resist the introduction of the eight-hours day as "most uncalled for and likely to prove highly injurious to the general interests of trade."

RAILWAYS.

The question of the hours of labour of railway servants, who, according to the General Report on Railway Accidents, numbered 465,112 in 1895, was made, in 1891, the subject of inquiry before a Select Committee of the House of Commons. Before this Committee, with regard to State interference, the most extreme course advocated was that the length of the working day should be restricted by direct legislation to a maximum of eight, ten, or twelve hours. No practical scheme has, however, been framed to meet the difficulty of providing in an Act of Parliament for cases in which adherence to the prescribed limit may be found impossible. It was admitted by every witness who dealt with the subject, and it is obvious at every stage of the evidence, that such cases must necessarily occur from time to time owing to circumstances over which the companies have no control. This fact was most apparent in the cases of the "running

department," for all practical persons allow that in the working of trains it is impossible to avoid occasional detention, from unfavourable weather, exceptional press of traffic, the unpunctuality of services running in connection, and a variety of other causes of delay. Among the witnesses who advocated direct legislation with regard to hours of labour, there were only three persons actually employed on railways, and these represented engine drivers and signalmen on the North British Railway and brakesmen on the Caledonian Railway. Those who urged it most strongly were the official representatives of the Railway Workers' Union, and of the Scotch and Irish branches of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. The secretary of the Irish branch alone offered any definite scheme, in the form of a draft Bill, which is in itself an illustration of the practical difficulties to be faced. The proposed Bill prescribes a limit of ten hours to the day's work on railways, but with no penalty for infringement except a fine imposed on the company in the form of an advanced scale of payment to the workman for all overtime to the extent of two hours. Any case where the day's work exceeds twelve hours is to be reported to the Board of Trade, who are to impose a penalty on the company for the offence, unless the overwork be shown to have been caused by circumstances beyond the company's control. Other witnesses who advocated direct legislation either left the question of provision for exceptions, and of penalties under an Act, entirely untouched, or recommended the appointment of a board of arbitration equally representative of the companies and their staff, to discriminate between individual cases, but did not define the province of such a body in conjunction with an Hours of Labour Act. The plan proposed by one of the Board of Trade Inspectors of railways, that the booked time in the case of drivers, signalmen, and head guards only should be limited to twelve hours, and that cases of overtime should be reported and explained, is not attended with the same difficulties; but it appears, on the whole, from the evidence, that booked times exceeding twelve hours are decidedly rare. Witnesses representing the railway companies unanimously protested against such legislation, which would involve the railway companies, and eventually the public, in great expense, and would affect railway servants very unequally. Most of the witnesses representing railway employees were opposed to all legislation on hours of labour, and

a number of memorials were handed in, protesting against it on behalf of men employed on various railways. The most emphatic opposition proceeded from representatives of the running staff, including engine-drivers, firemen, and guards. The ground of objection most frequently urged by these witnesses is that the shortening of hours, at least as hitherto effected, obliges them to lodge away from home at night; and they prefer to have the working arranged so that they may reach home, though to do so they may have to remain longer on duty. Recent demonstrations (February, 1898) by drivers and guards attached to fast passenger express service add supplementary objections that, after a long journey in a comparatively short time, they would be compelled to make up their eight hours by working local trains.

Sir H. Calcraft, the permanent Secretary to the Board of Trade, and Major Marindin, Inspector of Railways, pointed out further objections to a statutory limitation, as unnecessary and inexpedient. It is unnecessary because the force of public opinion, and motives of true economy, will deter railway companies from overworking their servants in future, and inexpedient because the difficulty of conforming to an absolute rule would cause either constant breaches of law, or, under certain circumstances, a total paralysis of traffic. The effect of a uniform maximum might be in some cases to aggravate rather than diminish the length of hours.

With reference to proposals for extending the powers of the Board of Trade, it is urged that the working of a railway is a matter for detailed consideration, determined by constantly varying circumstances; and no experience could suggest, or forethought construct, any abstract regulation which would be useful and equitable in practice. Moreover, the control of hours of labour implies the control of capital expenditure, and touches the independent administration of a railway to such an extent as to affect the final responsibility of the company for its safe working and commercial success. A business placed in so anomalous a position must ultimately be taken over by the State for want of private capital. The issue by the Board of Trade of a mere recommendation would be open to no such objections, and would exercise a certain moral influence.

The argument that, as an increased wage bill cannot be met by increased efficiency, it must be met by increased passenger fares—an expedient which its advocates consider likely to

succeed, because the majority of passengers are persons compelled to travel !—hardly calls for a serious reply.

The result of the Select Committee's Report was the Railway Regulation Act of 1893, providing that the Board of Trade, on the receipt of a formal complaint from any determinate body of railway servants as to their excessive hours of labour or insufficiency of intervals of uninterrupted rest (with special reference to Sunday duty), shall investigate the matter, and, if the grievance appears genuine, shall require the company to reduce their hours within reasonable limits. In cases where a company fails to submit the required schedule of times for duty, the Railway and Canal Commissioners are empowered to exercise their jurisdiction according to the Railway and Traffic Act of 1888. This Act of 1893, however, does not apply to the clerical staff or those employed in the company's workshops.

The first report of the Board of Trade on the working of this Act shows that during the year the powers of the statute were set in motion in 72 cases, affecting 31 companies. No difficulty was experienced in inducing the companies to deal promptly and effectively with such hours of labour, and the revised schedules submitted have always brought the actual hours down to twelve or under.

The second report stated that during the second year 156 complaints were received and inquired into. Special reference is made to "the fact that certain classes of railway servants, notably drivers and firemen, seem to be opposed to drastic action being taken on their behalf," the chief reason apparently being the consequent loss of overtime pay. It is claimed that "the effect of the Act.....has been to make the twelve-hours booked day the maximum on our railways"; but from the evidence before the Committee, as we have already pointed out, it appears that cases of booked times exceeding twelve hours were even then extremely rare.

The third and fourth reports refer respectively to 97 and 76 cases investigated and dealt with. The latest report says: "The Great Western Railway Company, at a recent revision of the hours of signalmen, reduced to ten the hours at upwards of 240 cabins; and the North-Eastern Company have reduced to eight the hours of shunters at over twenty of the principal goods yards, including some at which the Board have pressed for the reduction of the hours to ten without success. The Board also understands that the

Lancashire and Yorkshire Company have reduced the hours at sixty-eight cabins to ten and at forty-one to eight, and that the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire [now known as the Great Central] Company have reduced them at twenty-nine cabins to eight and at forty-seven to ten. The London and North-Western and Great Western Joint Railways have reduced the hours at twenty-four cabins to ten, and at one to eight; while the Cheshire Lines Committee have reduced them at eight cabins from ten to eight. Three other companies—the Midland, Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire, and North British—have reduced the hours of shunters at busy yards to eight; and the Midland, Great Northern, and Lancashire and Yorkshire have lowered the hours of goods guards to sixty a week." And all this is voluntary.

TRAMWAYS AND OMNIBUSES.

The chief difficulty with regard to an eight-hours day for tramway servants and omnibus men is the question of its financial practicability. Apart from this, there seems to be no reason why a double-shift system should not be introduced. Both employers and employed agree that a reduction of hours must involve a reduction of wages or an increase in fares. The managers of the London General Omnibus Company and the North Metropolitan Tramways Company, and the President of the Tramways Institute, agree that an eight-hours day at the present rate of wages would drive the companies into bankruptcy, and that any increase in fares would considerably diminish profits. With regard to the present wages, it may be mentioned that drivers receive from 22s. 6d. to 50s. per week, and conductors from 14s. to 40s. per week, and that the hours vary from 10 to 15½ per day.

Clearly legislation cannot improve the conditions of working. The question of hours seems to be one for the men to decide. It is only possible for the men to work an eight-hours day by their consenting to receive less wages.

The secretary of the London General Omnibus Company has stated that since the establishment of a twelve-hours day a very large proportion of the men have petitioned the company to let them go back to the long hours, on condition of increased pay, and that "a good many of the drivers had resigned and gone into the employ of private omnibus proprietors, where they got higher wages and worked longer hours." This official at the

same time stated that since the strike ninety per cent. of the men had memorialized the company to let them go back to the old hours and get 1s. extra per day.

The instance of the Huddersfield Corporation Tramways which work the double-shift system is given in the next section on "Municipal and Government Employment."

This industry is one in which the eight-hours day advocates are reduced to sentimental appeal. Mr. Webb, for instance, acknowledges: "It is, of course, quite possible that the increased cost of working tramways under an eight-hours law would render unprofitable, and therefore prevent, the building of new lines in districts where, under present conditions, the margin of profit would be small. This is an obstacle which meets the social reformer at every turn.....In this case the public have to choose between a possible increase in cheap means of locomotion and the continued oppression of a large class of workers. Those who urge this objection to a general reduction of tramway hours will have to show that the gain to the public by extensions of the tramway system in a few districts will outweigh the social loss resulting from the overwork of the whole class of tramway men. The interests of the many would, in this case, be sacrificed for the benefit of the few." This is not the kind of argument by which a commercial nation may be persuaded. For natural economic conditions of supply and demand it substitutes a compulsory charity and a reactionary sentimentalism.

MUNICIPAL AND GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT.

(With particular reference to Gasworks and Tramways.)

From the returns received by the Labour Commission, in reply to an inquiry into the conditions of municipal and Government employment, it appeared that there was but little experience under municipal management of the system of eight hours work a day. The experiment where it had been tried occurred almost exclusively in the comparatively large towns. Most of the cases where it was found were corporations with a population of 100,000 or over; and the rest, though not falling under this category, were towns of a considerable size, such as Halifax and Darwen. Among the small corporations and local boards no definite mention of the system was made, though the hours in some cases were short enough to make it probable that it had been practically adopted. With

very few exceptions, the eight-hours system (where it had been introduced at all) occurred only in the gasworks of the various corporations. This was the case in Birmingham, Salford, Leicester, Manchester, Nottingham, and other towns. It was found in a few waterworks, and in miscellaneous departments of some corporations. Generally speaking, it had, as at Manchester, been introduced in consequence of a petition from the men. Very few of the returns gave any information as to the results of the introduction of the system, but it is probably to be assumed that it had been successful where nothing was stated to the contrary. At Middleton, however, although in December, 1889, the gas stokers, among other things, requested and obtained the establishment of an eight-hours shift, by April, 1890, they asked to revert to the old system. At Middlesborough the gas manager stated that the men did more relative work under the eight-hours system than when working twelve hours a day, but that in consequence of the decrease in absolute returns it cost twelve per cent. more. At Newcastle, on the other hand, there was a conspicuous instance of the successful introduction of the system. For five years, it was stated, the Corporation had destroyed part of the town refuse by fire. The operation was carried on in furnaces requiring pretty constant attention. For $3\frac{1}{2}$ years the men worked alternate shifts of twelve hours each, but in the winter of 1889 a new arrangement was made, at the request of the men, of three shifts of eight hours. The result was that "with identically the same furnaces the amount burnt was so largely increased that the cost per ton was slightly reduced." At Blackburn Gasworks it is proposed to accede to a request for eight hours, but to reduce wages 2s. a week. This was done at Leicester in June, 1896, and seems to represent the modern policy.

It is convenient here to say a few words about the eight-hours day in other gasworks. The men claim that it has worked successfully where it has been introduced—namely, in the South Metropolitan Gasworks, in the Toxteth Park Works, in the Bristol Works, in the Commercial Gas Company's works at Poplar, and in the Gaslight Company's works at Beckton Station. Gas, however, they acknowledge to be a "monopoly," and "not exactly on all fours with articles that have to be exported and sold in foreign markets in competition with others." Hence the arguments of the gasworkers on this point have only a limited application to the general question. With this reser-

vation, however, the evidence of the gasworkers clearly supports the contention as to wages at all events. For instance, the secretary of the Gasworkers' Union claimed that more work was done in eight hours now than was formerly done in twelve. More frequently it is stated either that the output is relatively larger, though absolutely less, or that more work is now turned out in an hour, though the output is necessarily less in eight hours than in twelve. Wages, generally speaking, are maintained, and the majority of gasworkers throughout the kingdom are now working eight hours a day for better wages "on the whole."

On the other hand, by some employers in the gasworks it is stated that the change to the eight-hours day has been by no means an unqualified success in its effect upon the quality of the work or upon the behaviour of the men. One effect is that old stokers, or men of inferior physique, have to be dismissed, as the work is much more severe per hour than it was before. The increased cost of production is estimated in various works at sixteen, six, ten, and twenty per cent. But owing to other causes consequent on the concession of the eight-hours day, and the further demands of the men, the increased cost of twenty per cent. in the South Metropolitan Gas Company was subsequently raised to forty-four per cent., and in another case to forty-eight per cent. The employers expressed themselves as much disappointed by this result. The increased cost, it was stated, fell partly upon the price of the gas and partly upon the dividends of the shareholders; but the increased price of gas does not seem to have affected the consumption of gas, or the business as a whole.

These facts are representative of the gradual working out of the problem of the hours of labour by the non-competitive industry of gas-producing. On the whole, the experiments appear to be proceeding satisfactorily, but whatever is the ultimate result, whether the system of reduced hours is upheld, or whether a reversion to the longer hours becomes imperative, it is clearly shown that voluntary action is in its own way and time finding its own solution to modern labour difficulties. State interference can result only in harm.

The Huddersfield Corporation Tramways, constructed in 1880, were for some years the only tramways worked by a corporation. The Corporation intended to lease the lines to a company, but no tenders were received, as the under-

taking was regarded as unprofitable ; and, therefore, in 1882 the Corporation obtained special powers to work the lines itself. The men worked twelve hours daily until May, 1888, when the Corporation introduced a sixteen-hours day with two shifts. Wages were consequently reduced, the drivers' twenty per cent. and the conductors' ten per cent. A vote taken on the popularity of this arrangement resulted unanimously and favourably. The increased traffic resulting from running the trams sixteen hours a day has practically balanced the increased outlay necessitated by two shifts of men. The present wages are 26s. per week for drivers, and 21s. per week for conductors—rates which compare most favourably with the 21s., 19s., and 17s. 6d. paid per week for a ten-hours day in Sheffield, one of the latest municipalities to start business in trams. Without expressing any detailed opinion on the principle underlying the growth of municipal activity, beyond chronicling a protest against the undertaking of businesses intended to yield profit, the following figures may be quoted as showing that in this case the loss on the enterprise is not occasioned by the reduced hours of working :—

MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS : HUDDERSFIELD.

Year ended March 31st.	Income.	Expenditure.	Deficiency.	Special rate in £ to help meet Deficiency.
	£	£	£	d.
1893	23,186	39,812	16,626	5
1894	26,295	33,590	7,295	4
1895	25,598	28,071	2,473	2½
1896	27,898	29,861	1,963	—

No other Corporation working its own tramways has an eight-hours day. Glasgow, Sheffield, and Blackpool each work 60 hours per week ; Plymouth works 62½, Leeds works 66, and Liverpool now works 72 for a six-days week, with Sunday work optional. The tendency is in every case towards reduction ; and the policy of large towns to municipalize this industry is rapidly becoming general.

XII.—A FEW STATISTICS.

NUMBERS OF WORKERS, ETC.

THE total industrial population, male and female, in the United Kingdom, according to the last census, is 9,025,902. This number represents the total occupied persons, exclusive of professional, domestic, commercial, and agricultural and fishing classes, but includes many who are already practically working on an eight-hours day or less—*e.g.*, the majority of the 1,760,755 engaged in "working or dealing in mineral substances," and certain minor industries, such as seamen and some of the textile trades, which either cannot support an eight-hours day or already have it. The additional 7,517,331 occupied persons, again, include those employed in industries to which a forty-eight hours week cannot possibly be applied—*e.g.*, 2,341,696 engaged in domestic offices or services, and 2,526,690 in agricultural and fishing occupations; and the 2,648,945 in professional and commercial occupations, to which a legal industrial eight-hours day would not apply. These few totals suffice to show the enormous amount of work involved in proposals to apply Acts of Parliament.

The operation of the present Factory Acts in 1894 required an army of 88 inspectors, whose salaries and travelling expenses alone amounted to over £35,000. In 1895 the number of inspectors had increased to 96, and in 1896 to 111. And it is noteworthy that with the increase the Annual Reports have ceased to record the salaries paid. In 1896 the travelling expenses alone came to over £8,400. Then, again, assuming that the undertaking of all this work is the wish of the whole number of organized workpeople, there would still remain about 7,500,000 workpeople whose opinions have as yet not been voiced.

The total membership of 1,330 trade unions for the year 1896 was 1,487,562, or, allowing for the membership of Unions not making returns to the Board of Trade, about one-fifth of the total industrial population eligible for trade-union membership. The membership may be classified as follows:—Building Trades, 196,283; Mining and Quarrying, 284,806; Metal, Engineering, and Shipbuilding, 301,506; Textile Trades, 212,491; Clothing Trades, 76,800; Transport, 133,774; Printing Trades, 50,913; Woodworking and Furnishing, 36,141; other trades, 194,848. Proposals to

rule the majority by the organized minority are obviously quite inconsistent with all principles of individual freedom and justice, and a vote of the whole industrial population would be absolutely necessary before any just legal measure could be adopted. In addition to this, the views of the employers would have to be obtained, and for this purpose the impossible feat of defining an "employer" and a "trade" would have to be attempted.

TIME-WORK AND PIECEWORK.

Seventy-four per cent of all classes of the work-people in the United Kingdom, including those employed in agricultural and in domestic service, appear to be employed in industries in which time-wage is the most prevalent system. Excluding agricultural and domestic service, the percentage is reduced to about sixty-one. "Women workers are most frequently employed in piece-work trades, except in the case of domestic servants, the great numbers of whom are sufficient to turn the balance in favour of time-work. Thus, if domestic servants be excluded, only forty-three per cent. of women appear to be engaged in time-work trades; while, if they be included, the proportion is raised to seventy-one per cent." As time rates of wages are variously calculated by the hour, the day, the week, or the year, there exists no reason why, in the case of seventy-four per cent. of the total industrial population, the question of the hours of labour should not be discussed in bargaining for employment. We may, therefore, say that in the case of seventy-four per cent. of the working classes the total time to be bestowed for such and such a wage forms the chief item in the labour contract. In the remaining twenty-six per cent. the employed really possess more control over their hours of working than the employer; for in this case the rate of wages forms the chief consideration in the contract, and the hours worked vary with the rate of working.

DIVISION OF WEALTH.

One of the arguments in favour of a reduced working day is that a more equal division of wealth will be obtained. Some figures given by Mr. W. H. Mallock will show that labour already gets by far the larger proportion of the increasing national wealth. Erring, for argument's sake, in favour of the claims of labour, we may estimate the total

incomes of the United Kingdom about the year 1800 and at the present day to be respectively £220,000,000 and £1,300,000,000. Part of this income is due to increase in population. But the population has increased only from 15,000,000 to 37,000,000—that is to say, in the proportion, *not* of 220 to 1,300, as wealth has, but of 220 to 540. That means that, while labour has produced £540,000,000, the ability of the employing class has produced the remaining £760,000,000. Sir Robert Giffen estimates the income of the lower grades of wage-earners of the labouring classes at £633,000,000, and of the higher grades at, at least, £150,000,000. Thus labour in this country, while it produces at the utmost £540,000,000, receives at least (to cut down Sir Robert Giffen's estimates, which may be considered optimistic) £750,000,000.

TENDENCY OF RECENT CHANGES OF HOURS GENERALLY.

From the reports on "Wages and Hours of Labour," issued by the Board of Trade, details of changes in hours are obtainable. The following table is summarized from the four reports already issued, and enables a comparison to be made between the changes of hours of labour in the four years 1893-4-5-6 :—

	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.
No. of separate individuals whose hours of labour were changed: ...				
By increases	1,530	128	1,287	73,616
By decreases	33,119	77,030	21,448	34,655
Total	34,649	77,158	22,735	108,271
Net amount of reduction in working hours per week	68,937	311,545	44,105	78,533
Average amount of reduction per week for all those whose hours of labour were altered	1.99	4.04	1.94	0.73

Thus the tendency throughout the four years was towards a gradual shortening of hours of labour. A large proportion of the changes have occurred in the building trade. In 1893 *they were* 13,265; in 1894, 10,162; in 1895, 12,600; and

in 1896, 79,730 ; of the total affected. In 1896 the readjustment of working rules in the building trades involved a trifling increase in the average hours worked, but in nearly every case it was accompanied by increase in the hourly rates of wages. The large excess of the reductions recorded in 1894 over those which took place in the other years was mainly accounted for by the introduction of the eight-hours day in Government establishments.

Compared with 1895, the increase in 1896 in the total number of hours reduced is most noticeable in the metal, engineering and shipbuilding, and the woodworking trades. On the other hand, the amounts of the reductions in 1896 are much below those of 1895 in the building and mining and quarrying trades.

In the following table the changes in hours of labour of workpeople in the employ of public authorities, and of those in private establishments, are distinguished for each of the four years 1893-6. It will be seen that the reductions in the working hours of both classes reached a maximum in 1894—the year in which the average forty-eight hours week was adopted in Government workshops. In 1895 there was a slackening in the movement for reduced working hours ; but in 1896 the total amount of the reduction in the hours of workpeople in private establishments was about double that of 1895.

Employers.		No. of Work- people affected.	Total amount of reduction in hours per week	Average amount of reduction per week.
			hours	hours
1893	{ Public Authorities ...	1,693	7,596	4.49
	{ Private Establishments	32,956	61,341	1.86
1894	{ Public Authorities ...	46,313	185,971	4.02
	{ Private Establishments	30,845	125,574	4.07
1895	{ Public Authorities ..	2,038	10,840	5.32
	{ Private Establishments	20,697	33,265	1.61
1896	{ Public Authorities ...	5,057	13,383	2.65
	{ Private Establishments	103,214	65,150	0.63

OFFICIAL REPORTS ON THE "EIGHT HOURS DAY."

The following are taken from the above-mentioned Reports on Changes in Wages and Hours of Labour :—

1894.

"It may be of interest, in view of the attention attracted by the movement in certain trades for the reduction of hours to eight per day, to summarize here the more important of the changes of this character which took place during the year. By "eight-hours day" is usually meant a week of forty-eight hours. In some branches of the pig-iron and chemical industries, however, in which seven days' work is the rule, the introduction of eight-hours shifts has only resulted in the reduction of weekly hours to fifty-six. Excluding these cases, we have 57 cases reported to the Department of the introduction of the eight-hours day during 1894, affecting altogether 51,586 persons. Of these the vast majority (viz., 43,039) were Government employees. Of the remaining 8,547, 361 were employees of four local authorities, leaving forty-two cases, affecting 8,186 persons, of the introduction of the eight-hours day in private establishments.

These may be classified as follows by trades :—

Groups of Trades.	No. of Cases.	No. of Persons affected.
Building trades	2	140
Metal trades... ..	8	1,545
Engineering	8	996
Coal Mining... ..	2	654
Textile	2	197
Boot and Shoe	3	484
Printing	5	1,037
Chemical Workers	6	393
Other Occupations	6	2,740
Total	42	8,186

One case was reported in which a firm introduced an eight-hours day for cabinet-makers in April, and reverted to the fifty-one hours week in November, owing to the failure of the experiment." [This refers to the case of 80 cabinet-makers at Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire.]

1895.

Incidentally it may be here mentioned that in the year 1895 a similar reversion from the eight to the nine hours day took

place in the same district, and particulars are given in the November *Labour Gazette* for 1895, as follows:—

"The proprietor of a silk mill in Renfrewshire commenced in April, 1894, a four weeks' trial of the eight-hours day (from $53\frac{3}{4}$ hours per week) for the workpeople in his employ—no alteration being made in the prices paid to piece-workers, or in the weekly wages of the time-workers. The experimental period was afterwards extended to twelve months. According to particulars furnished by the proprietor, there was a material reduction in the output under the shorter hours, resulting, as far as he could judge, in a decrease of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the average earnings of the piece-workers. He consequently felt compelled to abandon the shorter hours. The number of workpeople affected at the commencement of the experiment was seventy-seven—viz., fifty-seven piece-workers and twenty time-workers."

The following is the official report for 1895:—

"In 1894 not only were a large number of persons affected by the introduction in Government workshops of the average eight-hours day, but no less than 42 cases were reported of the introduction in private establishments of a week of forty-eight hours, the number affected by these cases being 8,186.

In 1895, on the other hand, the tendency was in the other direction; in fact, of the 1,287 persons whose hours were lengthened no less than 680 were employed in establishments which reverted from the forty-eight hours week to longer hours. Only 823 men are known to have been affected during the year by the adoption of a forty-eight hours week, of whom 149 were employed in private establishments and 674 in post-office factories.

If we also include the case of adoption of an eight-hours day for seven days a week (making a fifty-six hours week), we find that 1,032 men secured an eight-hours day, while 723 reverted from an eight-hours day to longer hours, the net effect being an average reduction in the hours of the 1,755 persons affected of about 1.6 hours per week."

1896.

The following is the official report for 1896:—

"During 1896 there was an increase, as compared with 1895,

in the number of workpeople whose hours of labour were reported to have been reduced to forty-eight per week, and there were fewer cases of a reversion from forty-eight to longer hours of labour.

The total number of persons reported as having their hours of work reduced to forty-eight per week in 1896 was 1,314 (483 of whom were workpeople in private establishments, and 831 employees of public authorities), as compared with 976 in 1895 (149 in private establishments, and 827 in the employ of public authorities). Of the 483 workpeople in private establishments, 329 were employed in the wood-working and furnishing trades, 125 in the fur trade, and 29 in the printing trade.

In addition to the above, a certain number of cases have been reported of the adoption of an eight-hours working day for seven days per week. If these be included with the foregoing, we find that the total number reported as obtaining an eight-hours day in 1896 was 1,488, as compared with 1,032 in 1895.

There were 4 cases reported in 1896 of a reversion from forty-eight to longer hours, affecting 263 persons, 200 of whom were employed in brass and engineering works. The corresponding number in 1895 was 723.

These figures are exclusive of 418 persons in the Army Ordnance Department at Woolwich Dockyard, who had their winter hours increased to forty-eight per week, so as to assimilate them with those obtaining in other departments at Woolwich.

The progress of the eight-hours movement during the four years, 1893 to 1896, is shown in the following table. It will be seen that 1894, the year of the introduction of the average eight-hours day in Government establishments, was also the year in which the movement made the most progress in private establishments. In 1895 the number of workpeople in private establishments who obtained an eight-hours day was very small, and was largely overbalanced by the number who reverted to longer hours of labour. In 1896, however, the reversions to longer hours were less important than the cases of adoption of the eight-hours day.

Altogether, during the four years—so far as known to the Board of Trade—the eight-hours day has been adopted for 56,223 workpeople, of which number 1,121 are known to have subsequently reverted to their former hours of labour. These 1,121 persons include 655 workpeople in engineering estab-

lishments, 100 brass workers, 70 iron workers, 77 silk operatives, 80 cabinet makers, and 139 others. Of the remaining 55,102 workpeople 45,421 are in the employ of public authorities. The 9,681 others include 553 iron workers, 500 steel workers, 870 brass and other metal workers, 1,193 workpeople employed in the engineering and ship-building trades, 651 in coal mining, 120 in the textile trades, 484 in the boot and shoe trades, 1,058 in printing establishments, 419 in chemical works, 2,000 ammunition makers, and 1,833 employed in miscellaneous trades.

These figures include a few workpeople who are employed for seven days per week.

Table showing the Number of Workpeople affected by reductions to, and reversions from, the Eight-Hours Day, in the four years 1893 to 1896, distinguishing between Workpeople employed in Private Establishments and those in the employ of Public Authorities :—

	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	Total in four years.
Reductions to the eight hours day :—					
Workpeople in private establishments ...	1,304	8,690*	163†	565	10,722
Employees of public authorities ...	229	43,400	869	923	45,421
Totals ...	1,533	52,090	1,032	1,488	56,143
Reversions from the eight-hours day to former hours of labour :—					
Workpeople in private establishments	723	263	986

* In addition, 80 workpeople had their hours of labour reduced to forty-eight per week in April, but reverted to their previous hours of labour in November.

† 55 of these workpeople reverted to their longer hours of labour in March, 1897."

XIII.—THE NEW ZEALAND EIGHT-HOURS BILL.

THE following New Zealand Bill, printed as it was returned from Committee, is given as a specimen of the harmful legislation we are fighting. The *Canterbury Times* (Auckland), of October 14th, 1897, thus criticised it :—

“It is difficult to conceive it possible that any Government can seriously contemplate passing into law a Bill such as this, which would have the effect of crippling every industry in the Colony, and killing many of them outright. To curtail industrial employment will inevitably entail loss and suffering on nearly every working man. He will either have to submit to a material reduction in his annual earnings, or lose his employment altogether. In those trades particularly which are subject to fluctuations, depending upon the seasons, and in which extra earnings, made in unlimited overtime during the busy spell, have to carry a man over lengthy periods of slackness, the operation of the Bill would be most disastrous. It is surely monstrous to so restrict the liberty of a working man that only on twenty-eight days in a year is he to be permitted to work overtime, and then only by permission of an inspector ; while, under existing circumstances, the overtime earnings, in many cases, make an appreciable difference to his income. The eight-hours system is already firmly established by custom ; and it is insulting to the intelligence and capacity of any man to forbid him to work an extra half-hour, if he so pleases, without obtaining the written permission of the inspector. Moreover, it is only the factory workman who is by this Bill precluded from earning overtime money. The employee under the Government, or, in fact, any outside employee, is not so restricted. There is no reason why this invidious discrimination should prevail. We are convinced that, if this question is submitted to the consideration of those chiefly concerned, they will never consent to have their liberties so seriously restricted, and their earning capacity so unnecessarily curtailed.”

Progress on this Bill was reported from time to time ; but, as at the end of the session the matter was still outstanding, the Bill has lapsed in the usual way.

[AS REPORTED FROM THE LABOUR BILLS COMMITTEE, 12TH
NOVEMBER, 1897.]

Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.

EIGHT HOURS.

ANALYSIS.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Title.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Short Title. 2. Interpretation. 3. To whom Act to apply. 4. Eight hours established as a working-day. 5. Workers not to be employed more than eight hours a day. Penalty. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. On emergency involving danger workers may work longer hours. 7. Application of penalties. 8. Double wages recoverable if worker employed in breach of Act. 9. Factories Act modified. Proviso. 10. Working-day in certain cases not lengthened. |
|--|--|

A BILL INTITULED

AN ACT to define and regulate the Hours of Manual Labour in certain Cases. 1 title.

BE IT ENACTED by the General Assembly of New Zealand in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. The Short Title of this Act is "The Eight Hours Act, 1897." Short Title.
2. In this Act, if not inconsistent with the context—
 - "Day" (other than a working-day) means any period of twenty-four hours;
 - "Week" means any consecutive period of one hundred and sixty-eight hours
 - "Employer" means any person, company, or local authority employing any worker for hire, reward, or maintenance to perform any kind of skilled or unskilled manual labour; and includes any foreman, manager, agent, or servant of an employer who is expressly or impliedly intrusted by such employer with authority to engage, pay, or discharge any worker, or to superintend his work;
 - "Worker" means any person of any age or either sex employed for hire, reward, or maintenance to perform any kind of skilled or unskilled manual labour.Interpretation.
3. Except where the employer is a local authority this Act shall apply only to workers employed in factories registered under "The Factories Act, 1894" (not being dairy factories), or in or about mines. To whom Act to apply.
4. In all contracts for the employment of a worker, a day shall be deemed to be a "working-day," meaning thereby a period of [eight consecutive working-hours (exclusive of such interval for meals as is agreed on or customary) on each of five days in the week, and of five consecutive working-hours on one day in the week; and every such contract shall be construed accordingly. Eight hours established as a working-day.

New Proviso.

Provided that nothing herein contained shall be construed to increase the number of working-hours in a working day in any case where, by custom, agreement, or statute, such number is not more or less than as hereinbefore prescribed.

Workers employed in excess of working-day to be paid overtime.

5. (1.) Except in the cases and subject to the conditions authorized and prescribed by section fifty-five of "The Factories Act, 1894," it shall not be lawful for any employer to employ any worker to work for more than eight working-hours in any one day, or for more than forty-five working-hours in any one week, or to dismiss any worker for refusing to do so. *and this Act, any employer who during any day or week employs any worker for any period in excess of the legal working-hours shall pay to the worker, by way of overtime, wages for such period at such rate as is agreed on, being in no case less than half as much again as the ordinary rate of wages, or other remuneration.*

Struck out.

Penalty.

(2.) For the purposes of the *last-preceding* subsection hereof, section fifty-five of "The Factories Act, 1894" (excepting the first paragraph thereof), shall extend and apply to every worker as defined by this Act.

On emergency involving danger workers may work longer hours.

(3.) If any employer commits any breach of this section, he is liable to a penalty of not less than *five* nor more than *twenty* pounds, to be recovered by proceedings instituted by an Inspector of Factories before a Stipendiary Magistrate alone, whose decision shall be final.

Application of penalties.

6. In any such proceedings it shall be a sufficient defence if the defendant satisfies the Magistrate that such breach was caused by any special unforeseen emergency involving danger to life or property, and that he has paid or agreed to pay to each worker overtime for the period during which he was employed in excess of the legal working-hours at a rate agreed on, being in no case less than half as much again as the ordinary rate of wages.

Double wages recoverable if worker employed in breach of Act.

7. All penalties recovered under this Act shall be paid into the Public Account, and form part of the Consolidated Fund.

8. In any case where any employer employs any worker, in breach of this Act, for any period in excess of the legal working-hours, then, irrespective of the penalty to which the employer thereby exposes himself, he is liable to pay to the worker wages for such period at double the ordinary rate, and such double wages may be recovered by the worker with full costs of suit, any contract or agreement to the contrary notwithstanding.

Factories Act modified.

9 6. "The Factories Act, 1894" is hereby modified in so far as it ~~in any way~~ conflicts with this Act, but not further or otherwise:

Proviso.

Provided that nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to in any way affect the provisions of "The Factories Act, 1894," respecting holidays or the hours for commencing or ending work, or the intervals for meals.

Struck out.

10. Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to lengthen the working-day in any case where, by custom, agreement, or statute, it is less than as hereinbefore prescribed.

Working-day in certain cases not lengthened.

New clauses.

7. It shall not be competent for a worker to in any way contract himself out of the benefit of this Act, or otherwise deprive himself of the benefit thereof.

No contracting out.

8. If any employer commits any breach of this Act he is liable to a penalty not exceeding *twenty* pounds, to be recovered by proceedings instituted by an Inspector of Factories before a Stipendiary Magistrate alone, whose decision shall be final.

Penalty.

XIV.—CONCLUDING GENERAL SUMMARY.

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE AND THE DECISION OF THE EMPLOYERS.

THIS volume being in itself intended only as a summary of what can be said on the eight hours movement, it is hardly necessary to attempt to condense its main features into a few concluding paragraphs. In conclusion, therefore, we wish chiefly to urge two practical points, which, as it seems to us, not only comprise the crucial test of the question of a legislative eight-hours day, but form its solution. To the officious servant of the State, to the office-retaining-at-any-cost and time-serving member of Parliament, to the "h"-transposing mob-orator and arch-agitator, to the well-meaning and muddle-producing busybody, sometimes miscalled philanthropist, our advice in this: "Mind your own business." To the conscientious employer and to the honest worker we say: "Don't tolerate impudent interference in affairs which concern you and your living only. Combine, if you feel so disposed, but act as a combination with no more tyrannical coercion than as an individual." To the consumer no less than to the producer the issue of this question is committed, in full reliance on his common sense. With the public at large—and this is the first vital point we wish to urge—rests a definite decision on the whole subject. Public opinion has been compared to a policeman flashing the light from his bull's eye into the dark corners of the byeways of life, and bringing out of its hiding-place all that is foul

and intolerable. Public opinion, like a policeman, is not infallible; it has its weaknesses, and still needs a good deal of educating; but, on the whole, its judgment is fairly accurate, and on a matter which concerns its own comfort and convenience the voice of the public always speaks with no uncertain sound.

But a warning must be uttered against the danger of mistaking for the voice of the public the braying of the agitator, the cooing of his innocent victim before slaughter, the shrieking during the process, or the complacent self-advertisement of the subscription-dunned public man. The real voice of the public is quiet, but authoritative when heard. A national reaction against trade-union interference has set in, and will infallibly envelop the Legislature. We believe that the present temper of the country tends more and more in the direction of legislation restraining trade-union action than further restricting the freedom of a man to work for the good of himself and his family up to his full strength, if he so chooses. As Mr. Webb has said: "*Every* wage-earner is interested in *any* Eight Hours Bill"; but he is interested in the sense that resistance is his best policy.

Instances of legislative interference in this very question, and of its dead failure solely because the public had not desired it, and doubted its wisdom, are numerous.

"A writer in the 'Dictionary of Political Economy, 1894,' reminds us that, of the fifty-two eight-hours trades in Melbourne, not one got the eight hours by law; for, though the miners got the eight-hours law in 1883, many of them had the eight hours long before. He shows, too, that in Victoria, where the eight-hours laws have been passed, its operation has been suspended on petition from the workers; also that the unemployed question is more acute there. Finally, he shows that in the United States, where, in the first heat of the movement, twenty-five years ago, eight-hours laws were passed, all of them have, for one reason or another, long been mere dead letters. From all of which we judge that, while we cannot but wish that the conditions of life were such that an eight-hours working day could universally prevail, it were better to bring it about by education, moral suasion, public opinion, and legitimate trade-union agency, than by resorting to unconditional coercive legislation, which

may do irreparable damage to industry, commerce, and social well-being. The unfettered right of working men to sell their labour to the best advantage is a priceless boon, and honest industry may be discouraged by the State stigmatizing it as a legal crime."

So reads a recent report to the Eight Hours Demonstration League, made by the Auckland Employers' Association, in their opposition to the Eight Hours Day Bill, which seems likely next session to become New Zealand law.

Mr. Charles Fairfield, writing in 1890 in "A Plea for Liberty," said:—

"The first local circumstance, or condition, favourable to the success and permanence of the eight-hours rule in Victoria is the protective tariff. The second condition is the absence of keen competition among workers of all grades themselves. The third is the settled policy which regularly provides *ateliers nationaux*, or employment for that class which is supposed to be all-powerful at election time on State railways and so-called productive public works, thus 'keeping a market' for labour and creating a standard of hours and wages which private employers cannot compete against or vary. The fourth, correlated, of course, to the last, is the now inevitable financial, or borrowing, policy of the various colonial governments, which re-acts upon local banks and credit institutions. Colonial land legislation and the concentration of population in large cities are also favourable conditions. How many of these, it may be asked, exist in Great Britain?"

The most striking commentary on the effect of this policy is afforded by a consideration of the present bankrupt state of all the Australian colonies.

In spite of the oft-repeated prediction of Mr. Augustine Birrell, Q.C., M.P., that the eight-hours day for miners will, before long, be compulsorily recognised by legal enactment, we know that the miners of Durham and Northumberland have not yet resigned their manliness of independence into the keeping of the State. When they voiced their opinions at the International Miners' Conference at Aix-la-Chapelle in May, 1896—and again in London in 1897—they showed no signs of wavering. Yet, on June 1st following, Mr. Birrell prophesied to the miners of Fife and Clackmannan, at the

celebration of their own twenty-sixth eight-hours day anniversary, and on September 5th, 1896, to miners at Lochgelly, that the Mines (Eight Hours) Bill would soon receive the support of all the miners' representatives in the House of Commons. It is well known that the result in Fife and Clackmannan is that the cost of working the coal has increased, and the quality of it deteriorated; but that does not affect the general principle of legislative interference, it only puts one more nail in its coffin.

Since these forecasts were delivered the annual Bill has once again been rejected by the House of Commons, by a greatly increased majority, and the Durham miners have, at the cost of their severance from the Miners' Federation, reiterated their firm opinion against legislation.

It is undeniable that in many parts of the country, and in many industries, an eight-hours day is worked, and that by the force of the public opinion of that particular part or industry. This has come about because of the special conditions attaching to the locality or to the industry, and there is no reason why the extension of the movement—and its extension is undoubted—should not in time reach the climax of a general eight-hours day, with, of course, the necessary and unavoidable exceptions. National improvements reached by natural means are far more permanent and beneficial than similar results attained by the working of artificial laws and compulsory action, which has garnered the corn in the green ear before it was ripe. This is well put by Mr. Geoffrey Drage, M.P., in his statement of "The Labour Problem." Mr. Drage says:—

"Actual experience is at present so little advanced that no satisfactory conclusion can be based upon it. The individual instances where the shorter day has been adopted are, on the whole, favourable; but so far they are so few as hardly to establish a general principle. Moreover, the failures as well as the successes must be taken into account; and in practice much depends upon the peculiarities of the trade. One point, however, may be noticed. This is that wherever the eight-hours' day has been introduced hitherto it has always been done by means of a mutual agreement between employers and employed. In such a case all involved—employer, fore-

men, and workmen—are put on their mettle to make the experiment a success. This incentive would, however, not exist where the hours of labour depended upon legislative enactment; and hence the success of the trials hitherto made affords no presumption in favour of legislation, though it does so to some extent in favour of a voluntary reduction of hours by those interested in the trade.”

Even the limited application of the principle by means of trade or district option, or trade exemption, gives rise to technical and other difficulties, especially in the case of unorganized industries. Trades which are admittedly dangerous to health, or concern the public safety, stand in a different relation to the question. On this ground the hours of railway servants are already regulated by statute law. At the same time, Mr. Drage argues that—

“The objections which seem to prohibit any legislative interference with hours of labour, unless in exceptional cases, do not apply to the further voluntary curtailment of hours which may be brought about in any trade by agreement between the employers and workpeople. Organized effort upon the part of the employed has already done much in this direction, and there seems no reason to suppose that it cannot go further still. But, whilst the growing desire for more leisure in which to carry on self-culture, and fulfil the duties of citizenship, upon the part of the workers must appeal to the sympathy and respect of all right-minded employers, as well as of the general public, it cannot be doubted that a more intelligent knowledge of the complicated conditions of the trade in question will often enable the employees to appreciate the grave difficulties and possible injury connected with a further restriction of hours which they may have overlooked.”

Mr. Annand, too, strongly denounces legal compulsion. In a letter to the *Times*, published on October 4th, 1897, he said:—

“As a panacea for our social ills I regard it as grotesque. So large an earthquake was surely never dosed with so small a pill. As a measure for the increased comfort and well-being of the workmen, I think it is more than doubtful. As an economic change, I think it is risky, but may

be tried without serious peril, if employers and workmen so agree. I think the employers know best where and when and whether such a change can be safely and profitably made. I repeat that the experience of a Government Department is nothing to go by, even if we had such experience. For my part, I have never seen the slightest attempt scientifically to tell us what has really been the result of the experiment made in this country. What is true of governments is true of special firms, who, for various reasons, find it practicable to work the shorter day. They are no general guide. All this as regards a voluntary eight-hours day. A legal eight-hours day for everybody is not intended, I hope, for serious discussion, even although the Trades Union Congress has once more declared in its favour. A legal eight-hours day, for anybody outside women and children, I have always held to be an unjustifiable interference with the liberty of the workman ; to my mind his acceptance of it would be the most striking proof of decadence which we see in our time."

The question of reduced hours must be viewed from three standpoints—that of the public, of the employed, and of the employer. It is in connection with the latter that we wish to urge the second important point. A rigid eight-hours day is acknowledged to be impossible. We are convinced that, on the part of the employed, there is no genuine demand for it, either sectionally or universally. On this point Mr. James Mawdsley may be considered as voicing the opinions of those whom reduced hours affect, and as recently as March 27th, 1898, he wrote to the effect that, if organized workmen really wished to abolish overtime, they could do so ; but, as a matter of fact, they not only worked overtime cheerfully, but in the iron trades especially, "measured up the attractiveness of a shop by the amount of overtime they can put in." Eight-hours is a cry adopted by socialist and dreaming reformers, merely as a means of advertising their agitation, and thus earning a good subscriptional living. That being so, we urge upon the employer to see that he treats his workmen well. We do not wish to be sentimental, or to scream to him "in the name of humanity," as a meaningless phrase has it ; we do not wish to trespass upon his business concerns ; but we do wish to point out that, with modern appliances and comparative ease of elaborate pro-

duction, there exists a grave danger of turning out ephemeral butterfly work.

There is probably at the present day very little justification for a repetition of the charge made by Mr. Thomas Burt in the *Contemporary Review* in 1889—viz., that "at present in some industries the hours are scandalously and injuriously long," and that "in nearly every case" such overlong hours "could, with advantage to everybody concerned, and injury to none, be greatly reduced." Again, it is not a true statement of the case to assert, as did Mr. J. Burnett (now the Labour Correspondent of the Board of Trade, then the representative of the Amalgamated Engineers) in an attack on overtime, that "every man who works overtime four quarter days takes away a day's work from another man"; or to allege, as did another speaker at the "Industrial Remuneration Conference" in 1885, that "it would certainly be better that ten men should work six hours per day, and all be employed, than that six men should work ten hours per day, and the other four men go about idly as paupers." As Mr. Bradlaugh pointed out at the time, the cure for want of employment does not lie in forcing "ten to struggle for subsistence miserably where six might thrive comfortably."

But the employer must see to it that his men work the most suitable hours, all things considered; that, to maintain quality of output, national trade, bodily health, social security, and individual independence, working conditions are the best compatible with the service due to all conflicting interests and obligations. The advice given by Professor Thorold Rogers, as the result of his deep historical studies, seems to us worthy of full quoting, and of careful consideration by employers. Professor Rogers said:—

"I stated in a previous chapter that [in the fifteenth century] the day was one of eight hours' work, and grounded my opinion on the fact that winter wages were reckoned to be payable only in the months of December and January, and from the fact that extra hours, sometimes as many as forty-eight in the week, are frequently paid for by the King's agents when hurried work was needed. These hours, of course, were not continuous, being broken for nonschenes, dinner, and supper in the summer, and for nonschenes and dinner in the shorter days. During the winter solstice it seems that only the

dinner time was allowed. Even when the Act of Elizabeth and the regulations of the Quarter Sessions prescribed a day of twelve hours all the year round—for this is in effect the meaning of the clause—two hours and a half were allowed for rest, and the day was brought down, on an average, to nine hours and a half. But this was precisely one of those prescriptions which labourers would be sure to resist, and employers would find it expedient not to insist on. That it was evaded is, I think, clear, from the fact that the Quarter Sessions' ordinances constantly call attention to the law, and remind artizans of the penalties they incurred—a penny for every hour of absence. Employers were very likely to discover that the labourer's resistance to an excessively long day was not entirely personal, and that the work might suffer from the workman's weariness or exhaustion. Now, the quality of the work in the old times of which I have written is unquestionable. It stands to this day a proof of how excellent ancient masonry was. The building, from the construction of which I have inferred so much as to work and wages, is still standing as it was left four centuries ago. I am persuaded that such perfect masonry would have been incompatible with a long hours day. You may still see brickwork of the next century, which I venture on asserting no modern work would parallel; and, within five minutes' walk of it, Roman brickwork, probably sixteen centuries old, which is as solid and substantial as when it was first erected. The artisan who is demanding at this time an eight-hours day in the building trades is simply striving to recover what his ancestor worked by four or five centuries ago. It is only to be hoped that he will emulate the integrity and thoroughness of the work which his ancestor performed."

But if, as in the engineering trade, the employers severally or as a united body find that without anticipated dire results they are unable to give an eight-hours day to their workmen, they must refuse firmly, and without wavering abide by their decision. Their battle-cry, "No third parties! no interference!" was both honourable and just.

It may with truth be urged that in these views there is displayed a want of "humanity," or at least a lack of sentiment and sympathy. To such criticism it must be replied

that exhibitions of an unhealthy sentiment have for some time past obscured the issues of all social and industrial problems. We all know and feel only too well that poor sempstresses are sweated and ground down till, for a bare starvation existence, they sew their fingers to the bone; that some railway employees are compelled at times to remain on duty till they fall asleep from sheer fatigue; that some 'bus conductors, owing to their hurried opportunities for meals and too long hours of standing and exposure in all weathers, suffer agonies of ill-health; that coal-getting is in some instances attended by imminent risk to life and limb. We know and acknowledge all this, and we could, had we the mind to do so, write reams of piteous whining about it all, and with perfect truth. But this shows the picture in only one light—the light too often so highly coloured that the sole results are explosions of weak and ridiculous sentimentalism and outbursts of worthless gush that move no one to activities of relief, but merely to cries aloud to the Legislature, the Legislature. Our task has been to endeavour to show the picture in a full and steady light, a light—as we think—of common sense and reason, and to summon all thinking and intelligent fellow-subjects to overthrow this legislative Baal who heareth not, and whose power exists only in diseased and slothful imaginations.

Any oppressions that may be in our midst are all heaped up upon a helpless minority by a minority. They must affect the minority chiefly, for otherwise where is our national health?—and as a nation we are healthy and prosperous. In the hands of you, the majority, whose toil, although sometimes doubtless far from pleasant and a sad delight, is yet not an insufferable hardship; in the hands of you, the public, with your power to speak as the voice of a trumpet in the full blaze and glory of a cloudless noon-day, is the fate of the weaker workers. And to you, the employers, we say it is only by the might of individual example that the victory of good living for your workmen, with unfettered liberty, will be won.

XV.—THE DEMAND FOR AN EIGHT-HOURS DAY IN THE ENGINEERING AND KINDRED TRADES: 1897-8.

It is proposed to give, as an appendix in diary form, some facts in connection with the dispute in the engineering trade, selected to show the connection between the dispute and the demand for an eight-hours day, and the result in that connection. It is convenient to preface these facts with a statement showing the position of a similar demand about the same time from the shipbuilding and kindred sections of the engineering trade, although the issue of that demand in no way affected the engineering strike in progress at a later stage of negotiations with the employers concerned.

Similarly, although the attitude of the boilermakers had no immediate effect upon the dispute, it is convenient to record their negotiations and decisions in the matter. The strike, in defiance of the Executive, of the members of the London section of the Boilermakers' Society of course forms an incident in the strike proper.

The membership of the trade societies affected, given in the *Labour Gazette* in July, 1897, was as follows:—

Amalgamated Society of Engineers	91,919
Steam Engine Makers' Society	8,400
Amalgamated Society of Toolmakers	2,390
United Machine Workers' Association	4,129
United Society of Smiths and Hammermen	950
London and Provincial Society of Coppersmiths	418
London and District United Society of Drillers	350
London United Society of Brassfinishers	379
London and Provincial Society of Hammermen	253
Scientific Instrument Makers' Trade Society	641
Total	109,829

The four first-named unions are of national extent, the membership of the remainder being chiefly in London.

The Federated Engineering and Shipbuilding Employers in January, 1897, comprised over 700 of the leading engineering firms of the United Kingdom.

The facts selected are here arranged under the following heads:—

1. The Eight-Hours Question in the Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades.

2. The Boilermakers' Attitude and the Strike in London.
3. The Engineers' Strike in London and the ensuing General Lock-out and Strike.
4. Some of the Trade Unions' Reasons for raising the Demand.
5. Some of the Employers' Reasons for refusing the Demand.
6. Why some Firms granted the Demand.
7. Why so many Firms Reverted to Longer Hours.
8. Some Personal Observations.

1. THE EIGHT HOURS' QUESTION IN THE ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING TRADES.

1896. Nov. 11th.—At a meeting in Hull the question of hours of labour was discussed by the Federation of the Shipbuilding and Engineering Trades of the United Kingdom (comprising the following sixteen trade unions, with a total membership of 173,451: Blacksmiths, Associated; Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders; Brassfounders, United Association; Carpenters and Joiners, Amalgamated Society; Carpenters and Joiners, Associated; Carpenters and Joiners, General Union; Cabinet Makers, Amalgamated Union; Ironmoulders of Scotland, Associated; Machine Workers, United; Painters and Decorators, National Amalgamated; Patternmakers' Association, United; Plumbers, United Operative; Shipwrights, Associated; Smiths, Co-operative; Steam Engine Makers; Shipwrights, Liverpool Trade and Friendly Association.

1897. Feb.—The questions framed and ultimately issued by the Executive Committee of the Federation to the respective committees of the affiliated societies were:

- "1. Is your Executive Committee in favour of a movement to curtail the hours of labour?
2. If so, to what extent?
3. Are you in favour of taking a vote of the whole of the federated societies upon the question?"

May 26th.—At the annual meeting in Hull the following expressions of opinions were recorded: Boilermakers.—1. Yes. 2. An eight-hour day. 3. Yes. Ironmoulders.—1. Yes. 2. An all-round 51 hours. 3. Yes. Brassfounders.—1. Yes. 2. An eight-hours day. 3. Yes. Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners.—In favour of shortening hours of labour wherever it can be done, but object to organised effort to secure uniformity; better to leave the question in the hands of the workmen in the various localities. 3. No. Associated Carpenters and Joiners.—1. Yes. 2. Forty-five hours per week. 3. Yes. Painters.—1. Yes, in shipyards. 3. Yes. Blacksmiths (Associated).—1. Yes. 2. Fifty-one hours. Shipwrights (Associated).—1. Yes. 2. Forty-eight hours. 3. Yes.—Smiths (Co-operative).—1. Against any alteration.

It was, therefore, decided to take a vote on the basis that no distinction could be made between the various sections of any trade; and it was unanimously agreed that the aggregate vote should count,

and that the result should be in the hands of the secretary not later than 1st Sept., 1897. The questions for voting upon were reductions to (1) 51, (2) 48, (3) 45 hours per week.

June 21st.—Mr. William Mosses, the secretary, issued a general letter to the affiliated societies to this effect.

July 23rd.—A meeting, at Newcastle, of the Executive Committee of the Federation carried a resolution to the effect: "That we respectfully approach the Employers' Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades, requesting a conference between them and this Executive, to consider the advisability of reducing the working hours, the conference to be held at an early date."

August 5th.—The Employers' Federation replied to this proposal, stating that, while they were at all times ready to meet representatives of their workmen, the present was not a time when the subject would be likely to receive the calm and dispassionate consideration its importance demanded. They, therefore, thought it would be better to postpone the matter for the present, but in the meantime they would be happy to consider any further representations on the subject.

Sept. 18th.—A letter addressed to Messrs. Biggart and Robinson, secretaries to the Federated Engineering and Shipbuilding Employers, apprised them of the fact that a meeting of the Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades, held on Sept. 16th at Carlisle, to consider the hours' question, resolved to request the Employers' Federation to hold an immediate conference in order that the trades may give personally the result of the recent vote: explain their position and policy with regard to the question, whilst formally requesting a reduction of the present hours: and learn the exact nature of the employers' objection to a reduction of hours.

Sept 23rd.—A similar letter was addressed to Mr. J. Muirhead, secretary, Shipbuilders' Federation, Glasgow, and to representatives of employers at Sunderland, Hartlepool, Belfast, and Aberdeen.

Oct. 5th.—In final reply to the request contained in this and some supplementary explanatory correspondence, in full meeting of the Executive Committee the employers again declined to meet the Federation in conference, and requested the men to "accept the resistance which is at present being offered by our members to the demand of engineers and others to enforce a reduction of the working hours as an evidence of their sincerity, and of their conviction of the impossibility of granting such a demand."

Oct. 11th.—At a meeting of the Federated Trades held at Carlisle it was resolved: "That this Executive Council appoint a deputation to approach the Board of Trade to use their influence under the recent Conciliation Act to discuss with them the present industrial position." Mr. Knight (chairman), Mr. Wilkie, Mr. Chandler, and Mr. Mosses (secretary) were appointed as the deputation to wait upon Mr. Ritchie, the President of the Board of Trade. The following is the final detailed result of the federated trades' vote upon the reduction of hours question:

Associations.	Number of Votes.			Total number of Votes.	Total Membership in 1896.
	For 51 hours.	For 48 hours.	For 45 hours.		
Boilermakers	6,627	23,392	1,070	31,089	40,776
Brassfounders	704	1,397	52	2,153	3,898
Carpenters & Joiners' (Assd.)	417	172	450	1,039	8,000
„ (Gen. Union)	84	647	139	870	5,669
„ (Amalgamated)	—	—	—	—	48,631
Cabinet Makers	209	352	10	571	1,860
Ironmoulders	2,503	454	128	3,085	6,761
Plumbers' (Operative) ...	289	739	119	1,147	8,758
Patternmakers	380	989	100	1,469	3,636
Mill Sawyers	102	508	8	618	1,178
Painters	442	1,418	342	2,202	7,690
Blacksmiths' Association ...	689	259	5	953	2,767
Machine Workers	—	4,144	—	4,144	3,499
Liverpool Shipwrights ...	375	75	11	461	1,039
Enginemens and Cranemen...	315	264	6	585	8,118
Shipwrights' Associated ...	572	2,517	170	3,259	14,235
Co-operative Smiths	165	228	10	403	861
	13,873	37,555	2,620	54,048	167,376

[The total membership of each association is extracted from the returns given in Mr. Burnett's Report on Trade Unions in 1896. They represent the numbers actually in benefit. The total membership in 1896, 173,451, claimed by the Federation represents the total number paid for at time of meeting in May, 1897. Hence the apparent discrepancy of 6,000. In the above figures the Mill Sawyers, who joined in 1897 with a membership of 2,581, have been included. The membership given above is of course for 1896.]

Oct. 27th.—Mr. Ritchie, with Sir Courtenay Boyle and Mr. H. Llewellyn Smith, received the deputation which claimed to represent nearly 200,000 employed, a number of whom had by ballot, as detailed above, declared for an eight-hours' day. On behalf of the Board of Trade, Mr. Ritchie declined to interfere at the present juncture.

2. THE BOILERMAKERS' ATTITUDE.

1897. April 30th.—The employers were served with the following application for concession of the eight-hours' day:

To the Employers in the Engineering, Machine, and other industries, employing members of the undermentioned Societies in London and District.

GENTLEMEN,—For some considerable time past the undermentioned Societies have had under their serious consideration the advisability of approaching you with a view to reduction of the working hours, and after full deliberation have decided to request you to concede the Eight Hours' Working Day without reduction of pay.

The Government of the country granted the same to their Em-

ployees in the Royal Ordnance Factories and Dockyards in the year 1893.

This example was followed by the Thames Limited, and numerous other firms, and quite recently the Ship Repairers' Association of the Port of London have instituted the Eight Hours' Day on both old and new work. [A statement which the Association in question says is absolutely untrue.]

We feel you will at once recognise the fairness and equity of our desire, which has proved beneficial to those who have received this concession, and satisfactory to those who have given it.

We request respectfully that your answer shall be forwarded to us not later than 26th May, 1897, the concession to take effect at the commencement of the week following the date of reply.

Societies forming the Joint Committee:

Amalgamated Society of Engineers,
Boilermakers, Iron and Steel Shipbuilders' Society,
Steam-Engine Makers' Society,
United Society of Smiths and Hammermen,
London and Provincial Society of Coppermiths,
London United Society of Drillers,
United Machine Workers' Association.

Signed on behalf of the above-named Societies,

DAVID BROWN, Secretary to Joint Committee.

91, Castle Street, Battersea, S.W.

May 28th.—The following further letter was issued:

"Gentlemen,—I am instructed by the Joint Committee to inform you that all overtime must cease pending the concession of the request of Joint Committee, viz.:—the eight-hours working day without reduction of pay. Our members are instructed to cease working overtime after this week."

June 18th.—In reply to a letter from the Employers' Federation, asking if the demands of April 30th and notice of May 28th have been made with the sanction of the Boilermakers' Society, Mr. Robert Knight, the secretary of the Society, wrote: "My Executive Council has had nothing whatever to do with the stopping of overtime in the London district. As there is no arrangement between the London and District Association of Engineering Employers and the Executive Council of this Society, the question of overtime has always been left to each branch in London to decide for themselves."

July 3rd.—On this date the engineers' strike commenced. The Boilermakers' Executive Council wrote to the Employers' Federation stating that they had issued definite instructions to their members not to leave employment or to enforce the 48 hours by a strike, and that the Society is therefore "not in any way taking any part in the stoppage of work in the London district."

July 10th.—The following questions, in addition to the three mentioned above (May 26th), were formulated and issued in a manifesto to all the branches of the Boilermakers' Society:

"First. Are you in favour of seeking a general reduction in the hours of labour in connection with all the Federated trades, who compose all the trades in the shipbuilding and engineering, with the ex-

ception of the Amalgamated Engineers, and number 173,451 members; or, Second. Are you in favour of joining the London District Committee of the allied trades for an eight-hours' day for the London district?"

August 29th.—The result of the voting was that 25,433 upheld the policy of acting in co-operation with the Federated Trades to obtain reduction of hours, against 3,403 in favour of joining the London Committee for 48 hours for the London district. The votes upon the hours' questions are given in the table under date Oct. 11th above.

THE BOILERMAKERS' STRIKE IN LONDON.

July 23rd.—The London District Committee of the Boilermakers' Society issued the following notice to the several Employers of a resolution, as follows:—

"Resolved that in future our members must discontinue working overtime on new or old work unless the Employers concede the eight hours on the before-mentioned class of work, both in principle and payment."

Sept. 1st.—In reply the Secretary of the Shipbuilders' and Engineering Employers' Association of London wrote stating that the resolution had had the careful consideration of thirteen firms concerned, who regretted their inability to accede to the request in view of the serious damage which such a step would result in to this port.

Oct. 14th.—At a meeting of representatives of both Associations an agreement was signed to abide by the agreement of Jan. 23rd, 1892, and to adjust in conference any disputed questions.

Nov. 16th.—Notwithstanding the advice of their Executive Committee, who had meanwhile suspended the London District Committee and Delegate from Office, and had also stopped all Donation Benefit and Strike Pay, the men went out on strike on Oct. 15th and remained out until this date, when they returned to work unconditionally.

3. THE ENGINEERS' STRIKE IN LONDON AND THE ENSUING GENERAL LOCK-OUT AND STRIKE.

1897. April 30th.—The above-quoted letter of this date was issued to some 800 employers in London.

May 26th.—A letter was addressed by the London Engineering Employers to the Joint Committee of Trades stating that a public meeting of employers had been held, and that the matter was receiving careful attention, although no definite reply to the letter of April 30th could be given by the date named, viz., May 26th.

May 28th.—The London Association of Engineering Employers were informed by the Joint Committee that all overtime would cease to be worked pending the concession of the request for an eight-hour working day without reduction of pay, and thereupon referred the matter to the Federated Engineering and Shipbuilding Employers, with which body they are affiliated.

June 5th.—The Employers' Federation announced to the Joint

Committee that after the most careful consideration the employers had resolved that they could not grant *any* reduction in the existing hours. They also asked for an assurance from the Joint Committee that the stoppage of overtime would be withdrawn.

June 28th.—The Joint Committee, not replying to several communications from the Federation, served notices on three London firms, viz., Messrs. Humphrys, Tennant, and Co., Messrs. Thorneycroft, and Messrs. Middleton, for a strike on July 3rd by the whole of the members represented by the Committee, if the demand was not then conceded. In the case of each firm a ballot of the men had resulted in favour of a strike.

July 1st.—A joint meeting of representatives of the Employers' Federation of Engineering Associations, the Associated Shipbuilders, and the Iron Trades Employers' Association was held at Manchester, when it was resolved:

"That, in the event of the members of the trade unions represented by the Joint Committee of those unions for securing a reduction of the working hours in London from 54 to 48 per week going out on strike as threatened, in any workshop belonging to a member of the Federated Employers, notices will immediately be given by the members of the associations affiliated to the Federation that a reduction of hands of 25 per cent. will take place of the members of such unions in their employment."

This resolution was telegraphed to all parties concerned.

July 2nd.—The Joint Committee of the London Trade Unions issued the following manifesto:

"Fellow Trade Unionists of Great Britain and Ireland,—You will doubtless have been acquainted with the fact through the Press that a powerful combination of trade organisations, composed of the following societies [here follows a list of the trade unions] of the engineering, shipbuilding, and metal trades, has decided to obtain an eight-hour day (with no reduction of wages) in the London district. The employers in this district have been personally interviewed by deputations, and also negotiations have been opened. So successful has the method of proceeding been that up to July 1st no less than 152 firms have conceded the eight-hours' day as requested. But the northern employers, viewing with alarm the peaceful method of concessions and generous treatment extended to the London workmen by the London employers, commenced using all the resources at their command to induce, cajole, coerce those who had not conceded to join the ranks of their Federation, promising all support possible, monetary and otherwise, if they would only endeavour to stem the tide of progress now being made by the London workmen.

We have not far to search for the reason as to why the employers of the north became so suddenly interested in their southern competitors and their workmen. It is quite clear the only reason they interfered came from the fear that, should the London workmen succeed in peacefully establishing that earnestly-desired and popular reform, an eight-hours day, their employees would not be long before they demanded the same concession. It is pleasing to note that the employers' success up to the present has not been phenomenal; but in

laying the case clearly before you we are bound to admit they have managed to joint up with them some of the less liberal employers in this district—employers who have never had a very high reputation for generous behaviour, and who have never paid their workmen more than the compulsory minimum of our trade organisations. The first step taken to compel into line those employers who had not granted our request was the issue of a notice to cease working overtime. Upon this the Federation threatened severe measures, but we refused to be coerced, and intimated the stoppage of all overtime. The next step in this important movement was taken last Monday in accordance with instructions of the full Joint Committee, when an ultimatum was issued to three London firms to the effect that unless an eight-hours day was conceded to their employees on July 3rd all members represented by the Joint Committee would cease work Saturday, July 3rd. The above notice has been construed into a *casus belli* by the Employers' Federation, and to-day we are in receipt of the following telegram [given above under date July 1st.]

Fellow-unionists, we have given you our position up to date, with the full confidence that we shall have your full sympathy and support in bringing to a successful issue the desirable reform which it is the determination of this Joint Committee to enforce at all hazards. Hoping that the Federated Employers, through extending the area of the struggle, will bring about a universal eight-hours day throughout the United Kingdom.

Signed on behalf of the Joint Committee.

ALBERT BIGBY, A.S.E.

JOHN BUTLER, Boilermakers.

HENRY COOPER, Steam Enginemakers.

JOSEPH SHEA, Hammermen.

JOHN LINDSEY, Smiths and Drillers.

DAVID BROWN, A.S.E., Secretary.

July 6th.—The threatened strike having duly taken place, discharge notices in accordance with the resolution of July 1st were given or posted by the Federated Employers throughout the country.

July 7th.—The A.S.E. issued to its branches a recommendation that, in the event of notices being given to the 25 per cent., all overtime of any kind be stopped, and a retaliatory notice issued for all men to cease work simultaneously with the 25 per cent.

July 8th.—The Joint Committee of the allied trade unions issued the following official notice to the various centres throughout the country, calling upon the men to cease work on July 13th:—"Fellow trade unionists,—In order to secure uniformity of action in carrying into effect your votes on the eight-hours day without reduction of pay, whenever a notice is posted that 25 per cent. will be discharged on a certain date, the remaining 75 per cent. must hand in their notices, so that all may leave simultaneously. On behalf of the committee,

(Signed)

"ALBERT BIGBY.

"HENRY COOPER.

"DAVID BROWN, Secretary."

July 12th.—With reference to the action of the employers the Amalgamated Society of Engineers issued the following manifesto:

To the Public.

"The lock-out notices posted at the instigation of the Employers' Federation of Engineering Associations takes effect to-morrow, and thereby a heavy blow is dealt upon the engineering trade of the country, and untold suffering inflicted upon countless thousands of inoffensive and helpless labourers and their families. Yet, if actuated only by selfish motives, we, as organised workmen, would find no cause for regret in what has been done, inasmuch as the eight-hours movement must be immeasurably advanced thereby.

THE EIGHT HOURS MOVEMENT.

The eight-hours day is to trade unionists a cherished aspiration, having its roots far back in the ever-recurring conflicts which have been coincidental with the growth of the factory system of industry. Its economic possibility has long been theoretically established, and many of the most enlightened and sympathetic employers have put it into practice, with immense advantage to their employees and without loss to themselves. Yet there has lurked in the mind of the average man a fear of decreased output, foreign competition, and other bogies, a fear of which will be dispelled as the publicity now given to the matter has time to do its work. The whole question has been transferred by the act of the employers from the academic to the practical sphere, and the public mind is being familiarised with the beneficial results of the eight-hours system as worked in the workshops of the Government, as well as in those of Messrs. Allans, Hills, Johnstons, Keiths, Widdins, and others too numerous to mention.

THE CONDITIONS IN LONDON.

Let us briefly re-state the case. For two years trade has been improving, as have also been the conditions of labour. The London engineer, however, with that moderation which has always characterised him, has refrained from putting forward any claim for higher wages, although wages have in the time been raised elsewhere, and doubtless could have been here. He has, indeed, concentrated his attention upon that reduction of the working day which, owing to the peculiar geographical and residential conditions surrounding him, had become an absolute necessity. It should be remembered that the last few years have witnessed a remarkable transformation. Inner London has been beautified and improved by new lighting, by mansions for the well-to-do, by better railway facilities, and a more complete system of transit generally.

All this we welcome because it has expedited business, and tended to the general good. But it has its harsh side for the workman, who, owing to increased rents, has been pushed further out and away from his work. Starting at the factory at six o'clock has necessitated getting up at four or five in the morning, and nine hours in the workshop frequently means twelve to fourteen hours away from home. He has started work on an empty stomach after a long journey, and therefore unfit to do his best, and he has left it with a sense of wrong

ranking in his mind. Hence the claim in London for an eight-hours day, a claim which has been recognised by most of the employers as fair and reasonable, which has been conceded to about 7,000 of our members, and which was in a fair way to being conceded by the others but for the intervention of the federation before mentioned.

FOREIGN COMPETITION.

The question now is, Who will pay the cost of the change? Experience proves that neither capital, profits, nor loss of trade has hitherto borne it. The workman works for the same wage for eight hours as he has been getting for nine, because he knows that it will be met by fewer breaks in the day, more efficient work, and saving in gas, coal, lubricants, and other incidentals in the cost of production. It is urged that if the home trade was capable of giving the eight hours the foreign competitive market would not admit it, and the employers have issued figures giving the wages at Stettin, Havre, Elbing, and other places where the wages are about one-half of those of the English workmen. But in this they have really protested too much, as it must be obvious that, if we have maintained our ground with a difference of 100 per cent., we are not likely to be affected by a change in regard to which it is matter of opinion whether or not cost will be increased thereby.

The contention is really at variance with the facts. The foreign market in engines, machinery, and ships has been made in this country because we have outdone the foreigner in quickness and intensity of output, which are incompatible with long hours and low wages. In a word, Great Britain has conquered the world by relatively high wages and short hours, and, better still, by maintaining that standard can she alone preserve it. Invidious comparisons between what foreign workmen receive at foreign ports for different work and under different conditions to those which prevail here will not avail the employers much. What they have got to get over is the fact that England's hold on the world's markets is not only absolutely but relatively greater than ever it was. In amount of labour per pound paid or shillings per hour worked employers here are better served, and ships such as the North German Lloyd's, which can be built only in 20 and 22 months at Bremen and Hamburg, can be turned out by firms like Messrs. Harland and Wolffs' in half the time at the same price, and a better job made, because the hours are shorter, wages higher, and good organisation, which never accompanies low wages and long hours, is in force. We have held our own up to now in spite of the croaking of the pessimists, and we shall continue to do so with an eight-hours day.

We have it on the authority of a Naval expert that the eight-hours day, judged by its product of the battleship *Fugi*, has been a marked success. In point of workmanship the ship in question was one of the best, if not the best, in the recent naval review at Spithead. She was built at the yard of the Thames Limited, which at this moment has orders on hand amounting to £2,000,000, where the eight hours has been in operation four years, and has resulted in placing the firm in a better position than ever before. It has been successful where

ever it has been tried, and there is abundant proof that the fears of foreign competition are groundless.

THE REAL OBJECT.

The real object of the lock-out is to crush the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. This has been admitted by Dr. Haswell, one of the Federation secretaries, who to a Press representative on Saturday said that the employers had widened the area of the dispute to the utmost limits so as to ruin our finances, and because we had pressed upon them a question which had not been discussed at a conference recently held on other matters. The Employers' Federation is practically controlled by the firm of Armstrongs, of Elswick, which for years has paid dividends on paid-up capital ranging from 15 to 17 per cent. For these men to talk of foreign competition is an insult to common sense.

We venture to place the true position before the public, knowing as we do that public opinion is after all the final arbiter in these matters. It is for you to decide whether these pseudo-Napoleons of Newcastle are to ruthlessly dislocate the whole trade of the country with impunity in the foolish endeavours to cripple the A.S.E., or whether, on the other hand, the workman is to be allowed quietly, peaceably, and calmly to work his way upward to increased leisure, fuller home life, and greater freedom, with the unfailing concomitants of mental, moral, and physical development which are the true sources of a nation's greatness."

July 19th.—The Amalgamated Society of Engineers issued a second manifesto. The following extracts relate to the hours question:

"We shall continue to put the case for eight hours as strongly and as courteously as we can, and we feel sure that as the lessons of experience, as well as the facts and figures from official sources, are assimilated by the public mind, the adoption of the eight-hours day is assured.

OVERTIME.

But there are one or two side issues upon which we desire to make ourselves perfectly clear. First, in regard to the sincerity of the demand. Mr. Siemens told a *Daily News* representative the other day that, in his opinion, what we really wanted was increased pay for overtime. The *Times* newspaper of Saturday last stated that "the engineers have no desire to be restricted to an eight-hours day, nor do they at present restrict themselves to a nine-hours day; they are simply endeavouring to get overtime rates for the ninth hour." This is untrue and unfair. We venture to add that it is unbecoming for a journal of the standing and influence of the *Times* to give currency to that which is so at variance with the easily-ascertained facts. In singling out the firms recently where action should be taken, a main consideration on our part was that certain shops had been run on the overtime principle in spite of our constant protestations.

The engineers have consistently and persistently urged the limitation of overtime, and, where possible, its entire abolition. For many years this has been pressed upon employers, and perhaps more than

anything else from our side, because we have had bitter experience of its evil effects.

THE EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION AND OVERTIME.

Only four months ago two of the alleged acts of aggression cited against us by the Federation of Employers, and upon which lock-out was threatened, were '*the arbitrary stoppage of overtime at Sunderland and Hartlepool, and the arbitrary restrictions of overtime on the Clyde, at Belfast, and at Barrow.*' We quote from letter of Employers' Federation dated 26th of February, 1897. . . .

LEISURE—NOT COIN.

At the conference which was subsequently held we urged the employers to restrict overtime to its very lowest limit. We quoted district by-law in force in the districts regulating overtime, and ranging from 18 hours to 32 hours per month. We sought to arrange on the lower limit, which was actually in force in the district where our membership was largest, and we are now willing and anxious to make that lower limit applicable in the federated area or out of it.

THE CASE FOR EIGHT HOURS.

We ask only that the eight-hours day should be discussed fairly and squarely on its merits. Upon this ground we claim the *Times* on our side, if, as stated in its columns on Saturday, the question is to be settled upon the manner in which employers hold their own in competition with other countries. We have already shown that profits have not been lessened by the curtailment of 25 years ago; that the trade has more than doubled in the period, and that our output is much more rapid than on the Continent, where the hours of labour are relatively longer. Let us now bring the matter right up to date. The Board of Trade returns of exports for the six months ending June 30th are just to hand, and show an increase of engineering products compared with the first six months of 1896, amounting in value to £432,395, the figures of total general exports showing a slight decrease. The quarterly returns of 'Lloyd's Register,' just published, show that the gross tonnage of ships under construction is larger than at any time for eight years. On June 30th there were on the stocks merchant vessels and warships of 1,218,756 tons, as against 1,081,447 for the same time last year, in the course of which there were launched in this country 72 per cent. of the output of the whole world, including those built on and for the great American lakes. One yard turned out more than those of all Germany put together; and in the same yard there is now upon the stocks a twin-screw steamer of no less than 20,000 tons for the Hamburg-American Steamship Company, who tried and failed to get it built in Germany in less than 22 months, whereas it will be built here in less than twelve months. All this shows that the employers here have little difficulty in holding their own.

THE *Times* IN 1871.

We venture, therefore, to suggest to the *Times* a reconsideration of the question in the light of its advocacy of the nine-hours day

in 1871, which was won under precisely the same circumstances as obtain at present. Then, as now, the firm of Armstrong was the centre of opposition; then, as now, a federation of employers was founded for the purpose of resisting the demand; and then, as now, we were met with exactly the same arguments. Sir William (now Lord) Armstrong wrote to the *Times* urging 'that a reduction from 59 to 54 hours per week would mean a loss to the employers of 17 per cent.'; that they had to 'suffer severe competition both by foreign makers and those at home'; and that the men 'had fixed a hard and fast line which allowed of no negotiation whatever.' But the *Times* of those days had a clear perception of the economic and other advantages of shorter hours, and on the 11th of September, 1871, in the course of a leading article, it said: 'It is alleged, and we believe it, that the engineering trade in the north of England is now most prosperous, and that masters are making large profits. If it be reasonable that the workmen should from time to time obtain a share in the augmented profits on business, there is certainly no way in which they could more profitably claim this advantage than in a decrease of the hours of labour.'

JUSTIFICATION BY RESULTS.

True, the change then effected was from 10 to 9 hours, but recent experience of the Government, as well as that of private firms, proves that the margin of increased productivity due to relatively short hours of labour is not yet exhausted. That the nine-hours day had been entirely successful, and that the evil prognostications of Lord Armstrong have been entirely falsified, is evidenced in the fact that his firm last year netted a clear profit amounting to £358,000; and yet these men, swollen with the pride of pelf, blinded by prejudice, and insensible to the finer feelings of humanity, are allowed to conspire together and to cajole other employers throughout the country to plunge an industry into confusion, and to bring misery into thousands of homes.

CONCLUSION.

We will have further opportunities of addressing you as the struggle continues. Meantime, we may say that there have come to us many gratifying assurances of goodwill from the Continent and America, showing that this movement has wider signification than can be expressed in official returns or figures of profits. It voices a world-wide desire, not only for fuller life, but for a more equitable social adjustment. In spite of machinery and subdivision of labour, the life of the people is still absorbed in work, and increased powers of production have, on the whole, not brought that leisure and increased comfort we had a right to expect. Hence the chorus of approval which has greeted the efforts of the engineering and allied trades, and which has proved that we voice the sentiment of friends of freedom both at home and abroad. The eight hours will not create a new heaven or a new earth unless coupled with a restriction of overtime; it will do but little for the unemployed, but its concession will give new hope to the weary worker everywhere."

August 4th.—A statement issued by Col. Dyer on behalf of the employers deals with the hours question as follows:

THE REAL NATURE OF THE CLAIM.

"The forty-eight hours demand is described as 'a popular one.' If so, it is assuredly due to the fact that neither the system demanded nor its effects upon the industry are understood. The present working week in London is fifty-four hours. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers demands that in future it shall be forty-eight hours—that is to say, that there shall be six hours less work each week, and that these six hours shall be paid for as if they had been worked. Six hours a week is nearly six weeks per year; so that what the demand of the Society means is that the employers shall give their workmen six weeks' additional holiday every year, and full wages for it. Looked at thus, the request ceases to appear the trifling affair it is often supposed to be. But it means a great deal more than this. It means that during the six weeks the employer shall not only pay wages for work which is not performed, but shall lose all the benefit of the costly machinery forming his stock-in-trade, and shall continue to pay his rent, his rates, his taxes, and all other fixed charges, just as though his works were in full operation. Stated in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence, the case may be put thus:—That an employer who pays £1,000 per week in wages is to be called upon to pay nearly £6,000 every year for services never rendered and for time never worked. The effect of so serious a handicapping of the British manufacturer in his efforts to obtain a share of the markets of the world must be clear to every one at a glance.

It is argued that a man can produce as much in eight hours as he can in nine, and the public has been gravely assured by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers that the extra six weeks asked for will, if granted, not only increase the prosperity of the country, but will assist the employer to face foreign competition on more favourable terms. Experience does not warrant the former of these conclusions. It has not been shown that a man can produce as much in eight hours as he can in nine.

But, whatever may be the truth as regards the man, it is plain that a machine is incapable of turning out as much work in forty-eight hours as in fifty-four, unless there has hitherto been a deliberate restriction of output. It is true that workmen in charge of machines do restrict the output; and the growth of the evil is a matter of grave concern to the employers. But the concession of an eight-hours day would be no guarantee against the continuance of dilatory tactics. And, assuming a machine to be worked at its full capacity, it is manifest that it must produce the more the longer it is worked. What the Amalgamated Society of Engineers requires, therefore, is not merely an additional holiday of six weeks a year for each man, but an additional holiday of six weeks a year for each machine, whose work is infinitely more costly. Clearly the cost of manufacture would be enhanced enormously, and it is cost which tells against British goods in foreign markets.

The officials of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers light-heartedly dismiss foreign competition as a bogey. More responsible people are, however, aware that it is only too stern a reality. Not only are foreigners securing a large and increasing share of foreign

markets at the expense of the British manufacturer, but both Continental and American machinery is being imported in increasing quantities into this country. Hitherto British commodities have held their own in so far as they have held it in consequence of their superior quality. But this advantage is bound to disappear as machine work displaces hand work, and, invited to decide between two machine-made articles varying only or mainly in price, the foreign buyer will naturally choose the cheaper. Now it must be obvious that the production of a machine will be similar whether the machine is located in London or in Hamburg, on the Tyne or on the Weser, and that the output for the week must be directly proportional to the number of hours the machine works. Accordingly, if the working hours in London are 54, and those in Hamburg are 59½, it needs no argument to demonstrate that the productive power of the machine at Hamburg will exceed that of the machine in London in the proportion of 59½ to 54. Nor need it be urged that, inasmuch as the Hamburg employer will get, if the present demand were granted, 11½ hours per week more out of his machine than the London employer, the former will be able to undersell the latter.

It is also to be observed that the cost of the machine-produced articles must be influenced by the wages paid to the machine worker, and since wages in Hamburg are 24s. for 59½ hours' work, whereas in London they are 38s. for 54 hours' work, the cost of the article is proportionally increased in London. In face of these facts it is idle to talk of foreign competition as a figment of the imagination.

POSITION OF THE WORKMEN IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE FEDERATED EMPLOYERS.

It is urged that as the introduction of labour-saving machinery has increased the volume of engineering produce in Britain, and has greatly facilitated operations formerly performed by hand, the workman should have his share of their resultant benefit. That is the pretext for springing the demand for a forty-eight hours week upon the London employers, with the unconcealed intention of afterwards addressing it to those in the rest of the country. The answer to this is that the workman is, and for long has been, receiving the benefit."

Aug. 9th and 11th.—A.S.E. manifestoes were issued ostensibly criticising the employers' statement of the 4th inst. and their general policy, but containing no serious reference to the eight-hours question.

Aug. 23rd.—In a letter to the *Times* Mr. Barnes acknowledged that the struggle was provoked on the votes of only 2,500 members of the A.S.E., opposed by 300 votes, in March last, out of a membership of nearly 10,000.

Aug. 29th.—An eight-hours day demonstration was held in Hyde Park.

Aug. 31st.—The Employers' Federation, in reply to Mr. Barnes' statement that working hours in America were fewer than here, circularised the following figures from the official statistics of the Government Labour Bureaus:

State of New York.—Brooklyn, Buffalo, Dunkirk, Schenectady, Troy, New York, members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, including engineers, blacksmiths, machinists, and patternmakers, work Monday to Friday ten hours, Saturday nine hours—say 59 hours per week. Ironmoulders work in Albany ten hours from Monday to Friday, and ten on Saturday; Brooklyn, ten and nine; Buffalo, ten and ten; Auburn, ten and nine; Elmira, ten and one-sixth and nine and one-sixth; Long Island, ten and nine; and New York ten and ten respectively, or say 59 and 60 hours per week. Machinists work in Albany ten and nine; Auburn, ten and nine; Brooklyn, ten and five, nine, and nine and eight; Buffalo, ten and ten; and New York ten and nine respectively, or say 53 to 60 hours per week. In Connecticut, New Hampshire, Indiana, and North Carolina, the average hours per week are, for machinists, 58.18; ironmoulders, 57.9; patternmakers, 59.0; engineers, 60.0.

Sept. 5th.—The Employers' Federation issued an analysis of the claim that over 200 firms in London had conceded the eight-hours day since the agitation began. The analysis dealt with 140 firms out of the 215 firms claimed by the officials of the A.S.E. as having conceded the forty-eight hours in London :

	No. of Firms.
Not in existence	1
Unknown; not in directories	13
In financial difficulties	5
Entered twice under different names	4
Government shops entered three times	3
Small jobbing concerns working solely for the larger firms... ..	51
Trinity House (!)	1
Not in the Engineering Trade	28
Makers of Specialities	15
Patternmakers (one with three men)	4
Working eight hours before agitation began	4
Deny having granted eight hours... ..	2
Conceded under pressure of work or compulsion, and waiting only opportunity to revert to nine hours	9

140

"The largest firms said to have conceded," the statement proceeds, "are the two makers of fire engines. One of them has conceded *pro tem.*, on condition that the old system be restored if the men do not win. The other has granted an advance in wages in lieu of the reduction in hours.

This disposes of 140 out of the 'glorious total.' Of the remainder the analysis is not yet complete; but the following notes are illustrative and instructive of how the list is made up:—

(a) An 'engineering firm' in Deptford, the full establishment of which consists of a father and two sons. They have mutually agreed to concede the eight-hours day to each other. A happy family arrangement.

(b) A concern which takes out its dividend in philanthropy. Magnificent, but not business.

(c) A carpet dépôt, which knows nothing about either engineers or eight hours.

(d) A small foundry, employing three or four men, has not granted the eight-hours day.

(e) A model-maker employing three men.

(f) A concern employing only piece-work men on outdoor work; never did work more than $50\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

(g) A large American concern with a branch in London, to which it was intended to transfer most of the business, under pressure (the hands being all union men) conceded the eight-hours day, but now doing as much as possible of their work in America. This is a case of British trade unionism destroying British industry.

(h) A concern which granted the eight-hours day because too busy to resist the demand, but working overtime ever since.

These are typical cases."

Sept. 6th.—The Employers' Federation issued a statement of wages paid and hours worked at Liège, Antwerp, and Ghent, to disprove the engineers' contention that foreign competition was "bogey." At Liège and Antwerp "the working day is from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. for six days, less one hour per day for dinner—60 working hours per week. In some places work stops at 4 p.m. on Mondays, but in these cases only 58 hours are paid for." At Ghent "the day averages 11 hours, sometimes six hours being worked before, and sometimes after dinner. Stoppage two hours earlier on Mondays takes two hours off the day." And, the statement adds, "overtime (Antwerp) counts after 12 hours' work. Night work gets time and half. Belgium employers use precisely the same machines as we do, and get 12 hours per week more out of them than the A.S.E. would permit here."

Sept. 8th.—A similar statement was issued showing that in Saxony the hours worked average 64 per week.

September 17th.—At a meeting of employers in London the following resolutions were carried unanimously:

"This meeting is of opinion that the demand of the Joint Committee for a 48 hours week, if acceded to, would be ruinous to the engineering trade of the country, and that it is the duty of every employer to strengthen the hands of the Employers' Federation in resisting the dictation of the trade unions as to the conditions under which their industries shall be carried on."

"This meeting is of opinion that, having regard to the almost unanimous resistance of employers throughout the country to the demand for a 48 hours week, the time has now come when those who have experimentally granted the concession are justified in reverting to the 54 hours week."

Oct. 5th.—At Leeds the Executive Committee of the Federated Employers resolved that:

"The demand for a reduction of the working hours to forty-eight per week has been carefully considered, and the employers can only repeat that the conditions of the engineering and allied trades do not admit of any reduction of hours."

Oct. 15th.—The Employers' Federation issued their complete analysis of the firms claimed to have conceded in London. They state that, excluding the philanthropic firms (such as the Thames Iron Works), the ship repairers, the coppersmiths, and the printing machine workers, the list does not include twelve firms of importance who have granted the eight-hours day in the belief that it will be advantageous. It is added: "The London district covers 75,000 acres, and contains 800 so-called engineering firms, of whom only about 8 per cent. can be said to have conceded the demand. Thirty-one firms on the list, who conceded under pressure, have since abandoned the eight-hours system as impracticable. Among those who have conceded are many who have only done so temporarily, and subject to the issue of the struggle. Others who have conceded charge to their customer a percentage on the cost of labour, and are therefore indifferent to that cost. . . . There are sixty-six, or—if we add the small firms, employing on an average $4\frac{1}{2}$ men each—ninety firms who have acceded to the demand of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and 276 who are resisting it. And this is how London is won!"

Oct. 20th.—Sir Courtenay Boyle wrote on behalf of the Board of Trade to the Secretaries of the two Associations concerned suggesting a withdrawal of "the demand for a 48 hours' week made by the Joint Committee on the Federated Employers in London" and a conference "to discuss and settle the hours of labour."

Oct. 27th.—In replying the Employers' secretaries observe: "The employers are convinced that they cannot reduce the working hours, as the keenness of foreign competition is increasing every day, and the fact that Great Britain has no monopoly in labour-saving machines places the manufacturers of all countries on an equal footing as regards quality, and possible quantity of output per hour. Those countries, therefore, are handicapped where limitations are insisted upon as regards the time during which machine-tools may be used."

Both parties expressed willingness to meet in conference, but, while the employers insisted on each side having its own chairman, the employed desired an independent chairman.

Nov. 3rd.—In view of this general assent a further suggestion was made by the Board of Trade as to the matter for consideration in conference.

The Amalgamated Society of Engineers on this date issued a manifesto which, while scarcely referring directly to the eight-hours day question, yet possesses great interest as typical of the unscrupulous statements circulated under the methods of the fighting trade unionism. In illustration we need quote only a few sentences:

TO WORKMEN OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, AND
OTHER COUNTRIES.

"Only a small part of the fight is due to our action. The eight-hours' day was being peaceably negotiated in the London engineering works. Two-thirds of the shops had accepted the shorter day, and only three had been struck. The Federation then began a pitiless

war against trade unionism, and locked out at least 50,000 men in the country who had taken no part in the London dispute or negotiations, had made no demands on their employers, and had no quarrel with them."

Nov. 5th.—The employers passed the following resolution at Manchester:

"That, without prejudice to the opinions expressed on many occasions by the Federated Employers on the subject of any diminution of the hours of labour, the Executive Committee of the Federation assent to a conference on the basis suggested by the Board of Trade."

Nov. 9th.—The employed accepted the draft basis of discussion assuming that the claim for reduction of the hours of labour will be included.

Nov. 17th.—It was agreed at a preliminary interview at the Westminster Palace Hotel that each side should have 14 representatives and appoint its own chairman, and that until the termination of the conference "the employers will suspend any notices not already carried into effect, and will not post further notices; and, secondly, the affiliated societies will not interfere in any way with men who may be in employment at any time during the conference."

Nov. 24th, 25th, and 26th.—The conference of representatives of the federated engineering employers and representatives of the affiliated societies held its first sittings in the Westminster Palace Hotel, London. There were present:—

On behalf of the employers—Colonel Dyer (since deceased), of Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth, and Co. (Limited), Newcastle-on-Tyne and Manchester; Sir Benjamin C. Browne, of R. and W. Hawthorne, Leslie and Co. (Limited), Newcastle-on-Tyne; Sir Benjamin Dobson (since deceased), of Dobson and Barlow (Limited), Bolton; Messrs. C. E. Allan, of Workman, Clark and Co. (Limited), Belfast; George Clark, of George Clark (Limited), Sunderland; John Donaldson, of John I. Thornycroft and Co., Chiswick; W. H. Ellis, of John Brown and Co. (Limited), Sheffield; A. P. Henderson, of D. and W. Henderson and Co., Glasgow; George Jessop, of Jessop and Appleby Bros., Leicester; J. Hawthorn Kitson, of Kitson and Co., Leeds; John Laird (since deceased), of Laird Bros., Birkenhead; S. R. Platt, of Platt Bros. and Co. (Limited), Oldham; R. Sinclair Scott, of the Greenock Foundry Co., Greenock; Alexander Siemens, of Siemens Bros. and Co., Westminster; Thomas Biggart and James Robinson, secretaries of the Federated Employers; Major A. H. Hope, secretary of the Iron Trades Employers' Association; and Leslie Field, secretary of the London Engineering Employers' Association.

On behalf of the affiliated societies—Messrs. Alfred Sellicks, Alfred W. Golightly, Joseph Hooson, Albert Taylor, Frank H. Rose, James Ratcliffe, John Whittaker, George Ferguson, George N. Barnes, general secretary, as representing the Amalgamated Society of Engineers; Messrs. Craven, Shae and Bigby, as representing the Joint Committee; J. Swift, as representing the Steam-engine Makers' Society; and M. Arrandale, as representing the United Machine-workers' Association.

Colonel Dyer acted as chairman of the employers' representatives, and Mr. Sellicks as chairman of the societies' representatives.

Nov. 30th, Dec. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.—Conference was resumed. On the last day the following resolution was submitted in writing to the other side for consideration:

CLAIM FROM THE MEN'S REPRESENTATIVES.—DECEMBER 3RD, 1897.

"That, having regard to the increasing efficiency of labour due to improved machinery and greater intensity, the trade unions here represented claim the introduction of an eight-hours day or 48 hours week."

And the following reply was received:

REPLY FROM THE FEDERATED EMPLOYERS.

"The employers have carefully considered all the arguments which have been advanced in support of a 48 hours week, and as these do not in any way change the views already expressed by the Federated Employers they have resolved that they cannot consent to any reduction in the hours of labour.

All experience goes to show that any diminution of the hours of labour, even with reduced wages, entails a diminished production unless an amount of pressure and severity is used towards the men, which is injurious to them and distasteful to the employers. The trade of the country also will not bear any increase in the cost of production, which increase must inevitably follow any reduction of the hours of labour. Although the trade of this country is still supreme over that of other countries, the alarming extent to which orders are passing from us proves that our supremacy is rapidly diminishing. While our trade increases to a certain rate, that of almost every other civilised country is increasing in a far greater proportion, and, therefore, foreign competition cannot be dismissed as a bugbear.

In every branch of our trade we find that the competition of America, Germany, Switzerland, and other countries is rapidly increasing. We would point out that employers spend a great part of their lives and energies in personally studying those questions, and, being in direct communication with the Government officials and leading business men in other countries, they know from actual experience where the encroachments come in and how they increase, and they also know by what efforts they have been able to save trade that would otherwise have passed away from this country. We are convinced that, in the interests of our workmen as well as ourselves, and in the interests of the trade of this country, no reduction in the hours of labour can be entertained, even apart from the question of wages.

We cannot but recognise, from the discussion which we have had this morning on the subject of shortening the hours of labour, that the real difficulties which underlie this important question have not been thoroughly considered by those who advocate it. Taking one instance only, we point to the fact that you have admitted that the question of how to work double shifts on the 48 hours system

without resorting to overtime has not even been considered by you. The necessity for working double shifts is one which frequently presents itself to the employers, especially those engaged in the production of heavy engineering work, and it is one to which they have to give most anxious consideration.

The employers have means, not available to the public, of knowing and understanding how very serious is the element of foreign competition. Beyond all foreign competition it must also be borne in mind that engineering appliances of all kinds are conveniences which are adopted in proportion to their cheapness, and that even a very slight increase in price will cause them to be dispensed with to a serious extent, and thus reduce the volume of production, which is the best safeguard for the employment of a large number of the working classes. Any course which does reduce the cost of an article insures a considerable increase in its production, and to that extent increases the demand both for skilled and unskilled labour. If this country is restricted in reducing the cost of articles of general consumption, it follows that not only will the consumption decrease, but the countries which are not so restricted will be placed on more advantageous terms than ourselves, and secure an increasing proportion of the expanding trade, and therefore increase their opportunities of finding employment for their working population."

The employers thus declined to consent to any reduction of the hours of labour; and their proposals on freedom of employment, piecework, overtime, rating of workmen according to ability, apprentices, selection, training, and employment of operatives, and proposals for avoiding future disputes, were sent to ballot of the men.

The 14 delegates representing the men issued from the Westminster Palace Hotel an address to their fellow members throughout the country, in which they say: "The question of the reduction of hours of labour was at last reached, and very briefly discussed. We put in the claim for the 48 hours week, and, after an interval, the employers read us a reply, in which they, in effect, refused any reduction."

Dec. 7th.—A reprint of the conference notes on the eight-hours demand was issued by the Employers' Federation, and attention was called to the "meagre character of the case presented in support of the demand."

CONFERENCE BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FEDERATED
EMPLOYERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
AFFILIATED TRADE UNIONS.

*Verbatim report of the Proceedings, so far as relating to the
Demand for a 48 Hours Working Week.*

"Colonel Dyer: Now, Mr. Sellicks, we are ready on the 'hours' question.

Mr. Barnes: This is the proposal, 'That, having regard to the increase and efficiency of labour due to improved machinery and greater intensity, the trade unions here represented claim the introduction of an eight-hours day or 48 hours week.' That completes the

matter. We submit that as a basis of discussion. Endorsing all that has been done and said from the beginning of the dispute by everybody concerned, we think that we stand on strong ground in regard to that. I would only refer to the agreement with Mr. Mather (of Mather and Platt) four or five years ago. You will remember that at that time Mr. Mather made a formal arrangement with the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and other unions, who agreed to withhold any further demand for an eight-hours day for twelve months pending the experiment they had entered upon. That agreement was honourably carried out. We have had not only twelve months' reference of that in Messrs. Mather's, but four or five years since, and the result to our mind is entirely satisfactory. Mr. Mather has not only spoken to the experience of twelve months, but more recently up to date, or nearly up to date, he puts it, that he is subject to the same competition as you all are, and he is not engaged in any speciality, and notwithstanding that he has found the eight-hours' day eminently satisfactory. He says that the two hours in the morning are not worth having from his point of view, having regard to all the facts, and he says it has resulted in improved health and better time-keeping, and it has not been any detriment to him or anybody else. You have also Mr. Allan's experience and the testimony of the Postmaster-General, who publicly said that in the factories of the postal service the eight-hours day has worked satisfactorily. You have also the testimony of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and other Government officials—the whole of it in the same direction. We have also Mr. Keith, in regard to the point about machinery that has often been mentioned. It has been stated that the output of machinery must be proportionate to the number of hours worked. Mr. Keith, of Arbroath, a practical engineer, has given testimony directly contrary to that, and has stated that not only has the output for hand work increased per hour, as compared with the former output, but that the output of machinery has also increased, so that he has found it satisfactory. In addition to that you have Mr. Hills, of the Thames (Limited), who has testified also in the same direction. I want to refer now to a letter by Mr. Yarrow to the *Times* a few weeks ago, and the deductions drawn from it in the *Shipping World*. He has been in America, and he comments there upon the hours of labour and the conditions in America. Of course, we all know that the normal working week is longer in America than in this country, but he points out that owing to the climatic conditions the Americans do not work as many weeks in a year as we do here, and that, according to the *Shipping World*, they do not work more than 42 weeks each year, which, at 60 hours a week, comes out at 2,520 hours.

Colonel Dyer: That is shipbuilding.

Mr. Barnes: No, it is not shipbuilding. He is talking more particularly about the railway shops and other shops. I think it is in last week's *Shipping World*, whereas in this country we work fifty weeks in the year at 53 hours a week, coming down to 2,650 hours a year, it comes out that this country works considerably more than they do in America. Taking the figures as given with wages, we find the American earns on the whole about £126 a year as against

£105 earned in this country for a year. Then, with regard to the Continent, a good deal has been said about the hours of labour being longer, and no doubt they are longer. We all admit that, but in regard to the output I think that is altogether a different thing, as far as we know, from the actual testimony of our members who have worked on the Continent. I may say that I was talking to a man in Bolton only a week or two ago who had been there immediately before that, and he told me that the system of working there—a very inferior organisation—one man having to do a bit of blacksmith's work, turning, and fitting, in many places, so that the output is nothing to what it is here; and he told me the jobs that he thought could be done here in a week would take more than a fortnight over there. Altogether, I think we must admit that the output on the Continent is not as much as it is here, hour for hour. I would like to refer to another branch of the question, with regard to the apprentices, that we discussed here briefly yesterday. Here you have a decided advantage as compared with the Continent. It comes out in the report of the delegation from the Iron Trades' Association that went over there two or three years ago, that the percentage of boys in Belgium is less, and in Germany 7 per cent. less. In the engineering workshops it shows you have a decided advantage in that respect.

Colonel Dyer: Where does that come from?

Mr. Barnes: From the report of the delegation of the Iron Trades' Association that went over to Germany, Belgium, and Sweden, I think last year, but I could not be sure, so that on the whole, looking at the matter from our point of view, and also with a careful consideration of all available data that we can get to hand, we think that the eight hours could be introduced into your workshops with decided advantage to the workpeople concerned, decided advantage to the health of the men, and general tone and better time-keeping would prevail, and altogether the eight hours could be introduced without detriment to you or anybody else. We are willing to discuss with you the conditions under which it would be worked, financially or otherwise, with regard to shifts and any changes that might be necessary to make, but we think that you should discuss this matter with the view of reducing the hours of labour something proportionately to the increase and efficiency of labour that has existed since 1872, on the occasion of the last peaceable reduction. I don't think it is necessary for me to say anything further, Mr. Chairman.

Colonel Dyer: Is there anything further that anyone wishes to mention?

Mr. Sellicks: No, Colonel Dyer, I don't think we have anything to add to that, but I remember that when we were talking this matter over before, we instanced Woolwich Arsenal as an instance, and you retorted that it was run on the taxpayers' money and was not a competitive institution, and assuming that you are likely to take that view now, I would like to say that it is not altogether that—that Woolwich Arsenal and Enfield have really been put upon a competitive basis. Although they make for the War Office, they also manufacture for the Admiralty and the Indian Government, and the Indian Government and the Admiralty are in no sense compelled to go to

Woolwich for their goods, if they can get them cheaper elsewhere. Therefore, while they are able to retain very largely the work for these departments, it is done upon an entirely competitive basis. I wish to say this in order to disarm you, if I may use the term, that you may not use the arguments that you used before when we were discussing the question at our last conference. I have had that, of course, from the War Office. Another very strong point urged by the department in favour of the present system is this—you know that they have a sick-fund in the Arsenal—their percentage of sickness since the introduction of the eight hours has fallen wonderfully, and this is a very strong point in my opinion, one of the strongest in favour of shortening the hours of labour, that the sickness has fallen off to a very large extent, and also that there is a great diminution less broken time, and the two hours before breakfast have been experience in all shops that, as Mr. Barnes has pointed out, there is less broken time, and the two hours before breakfast have been utilised in bed, and very often, as you yourself have shown, there have been times, even when workmen were working overtime and broken time, when the normal hours had scarcely been reached. I think that is about all I care to say upon the question, and you probably would like to retire to discuss it.

Colonel Dyer: Before we do that I should like to make one remark with regard to the competition work at Woolwich Arsenal. It is perfectly true that they are in direct competition. When the Admiralty want work done there they send to Woolwich for a price, but the experience has been that the price Woolwich gives is very seldom adhered to, and when the price does not meet cost then they have to pay more. I know that for a fact, so that really there is no competition. On the other hand, as far as I have been able to gather, Woolwich does not work eight hours. I have their books of rules. I only mention this as you go along.

Mr. Sellicks: Except where the double shift is concerned.

Colonel Dyer: That is one question you will have to consider. Assuming 48 hours a week, how do you propose to work a double shift?

Mr. Sellicks: Oh, I don't know.

Colonel Dyer: But these are questions that you force us to consider.

Mr. Sellicks: We have not had much experience in that, Colonel Dyer. Do you mean as to hours?

Colonel Dyer: Yes.

Mr. Sellicks: Well, yes; how do they do on the north-east coast, Mr. Ratcliffe?

Mr. Rose: Mather's men go off at three o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Sellicks: Mr. Ratcliffe probably knows.

Mr. Ratcliffe: I may say that the system that is followed in Sunderland, at Allan's works, is that they commence at 7.30 in the morning and work till five. The double shift commences at five o'clock and continues till 1.15 in the morning.

Mr. Barnes: Do you mean the terms?

Colonel Dyer: No; it is the hours. I understand you to say that it begins at five p.m., and goes on till when?

Mr. Ratcliffe: A quarter-past one. I may say that there is a separate arrangement made in respect to the running of the machines. Suppose the machines continue running all night, there are machines that have separate engines to drive them. So far as I am informed, there are two separate engines on the works, and they continue the whole night till the following six o'clock in the morning. That is the system at the Scotia Iron Works.

Colonel Dyer: That is the system you would propose?

Mr. Sellicks: No, I don't say that.

Colonel Dyer: It is a most serious thing, and a difficult thing, to consider this question if we have no information before us.

Mr. Barnes: On the whole we would rather assume all that, because here the men coming on have an opportunity of seeing their mates coming off, and knowing the arrangement.

Colonel Dyer: Do you admit the necessity of over-lapping?

Mr. Barnes: Yes.

Colonel Dyer: But you only overlap at one end, and how are you to get over that difficulty?

Mr. Ratcliffe: There is the other advantage.

Colonel Dyer: How do you get over that difficulty?

Mr. Clark: I do not see how you can get over it without overtime.

Colonel Dyer: I am speaking for our own works. We are bound almost always to work double shifts, and I want to know before I can go into this discussion with my colleagues, because many of them do the same thing, how are you going to work the double shift?

Mr. Barnes: It is not absolutely necessary to see their mates at both ends.

Colonel Dyer: Pardon me.

Mr. Barnes: I have worked, and I never saw my mate. I saw him at night.

Colonel Dyer: You may have to give him a thing that he ought to know.

Mr. Barnes: That is easily arranged. I used to leave notes for him, and he used to leave them for me. There was no difficulty in going on with it. I went off at six and he came on at eight, or vice versa.

Colonel Dyer: That is a point that is essential, and needed by all mechanical works where there is overlapping. So essential is it to consider the question that when they do work double shifts they do away with the eight hours at Woolwich.

Mr. Barnes: Last year I worked there, and I only saw my mate once.

Mr. Clark: What hours did you work in the night shift there?

Mr. Barnes: Long hours. There is no doubt about that. They were too long—somewhere about 10½ or 11.

Mr. Clark: Did you work right round to make the time?

Mr. Barnes: No; I went off at six o'clock, and the other man started at eight. There were always two hours that the machines were not running.

Colonel Dyer: In the rules of the Arsenal it is laid down that the two shifts shall overlap, and how are you going to do that?

Mr. Barnes: In regard to the rules, they lay down rules that are

never observed, but I am speaking of the actual facts, which are, as I say, that a man only sees his mate at one end and not at the other.

Colonel Dyer: But it is laid down as an axiom that in case of double shifts it is absolutely necessary that they should overlap, and so important is it that it is in the printed rules of the Arsenal that they do overlap, and I want to know from you how you propose to work 48 hours a week with a double shift and have no overtime?

Mr. Barnes: Frankly speaking, I do not see how it can be done.

Colonel Dyer: How could you overlap at both ends? There is only one method of doing it, by splitting it into two periods.

Mr. Donaldson: May I say something about the competition with India? I have it on very high authority that the whole of the 70,000 men fighting on the frontier have had no munitions of war from Woolwich at all, they were all manufactured in India, and for £80 they can get as much as would cost £120 in Woolwich.

Mr. Sellicks: You have carriage and other outlays.

Mr. Donaldson: By reason of that there is about £200,000 of work that might be done elsewhere.

Mr. Barnes: In India they have been preparing to do their own work, and that is not due to the introduction of the eight hours. Surely Mr. Donaldson knows that?

Mr. Donaldson: But it is a question of competition.

Mr. Barnes: They have been preparing for years to do their own work in India.

Colonel Dyer: They did it when I was in India 25 years ago.

Mr. Laird: I suppose it is the equivalent to a night and day shift that is sometimes worked at Woolwich. I think we ought to know how it is proposed to do it.

Mr. Hooson: They work from Monday at six o'clock to the following Monday without intermission, and it would be easy to work three shifts.

Colonel Dyer: How are you to feed?

Mr. Hooson: I refer to Cammell's, in Sheffield. I have worked without intermission, on Sundays and no meal hours.

Colonel Dyer: Do you propose eight-hour shifts and no meal hours?

Mr. Hooson: From Monday at six o'clock till the following Monday. It is quite a common occurrence at some machinery.

Mr. Ellis: That is solely as regards heavy machines, which will run possibly three or four hours singly with casual attention, and the men are quite well able to get their meals while the machine is going, without attending to the work in any way; and I think, with reference to that point, the good time which the men work in those shops is very strong evidence that the conditions under which they work as regards hours in no way damage their health."

Dec. 14th.—The ballot resulted in rejection of the employers' proposals by 68,966 votes to 752.

Dec. 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th.—Conference was resumed. The employers again refused the demand for a 48 hours' week, and also declined a proposal for a 51 hours' week and for reference of the hours

question to arbitration. The verbatim report issued later (Jan. 7th, 1898) of the discussion on Dec. 17th was as follows:

HOURS OF LABOUR.

"Colonel Dyer: I feel quite confident that if we try on both sides to get a larger volume of production, that the employment of skilled and unskilled will be there, and the more is the volume increased; and if we want to get shorter hours of labour the only thing is to run the foreigner out of competition, and then come and ask for that, and I don't think it will be refused; but till that time comes I think it hopeless to hope to compete with America and the Continent if we reduce the hours of labour below what they are at present.

Mr. Sellicks: Then your reply, I presume, is that no reduction of hours at the present time is possible?

Colonel Dyer: I think that is our feeling very strongly. It is not that we have not thought about the matter. I want to correct an impression that appears to have got abroad that when we handed you that written statement the last time we met, that was a prepared statement. I can assure you that there was not one single line of it ever thought of, for every line of that was written and thought out after we had seen you and had received your arguments in favour of the eight hours. It was entirely composed after you had spoken.

Later on the following passed:—

Mr. Barnes: Will you be willing to consider this matter in three months time?

Colonel Dyer: In three months time we shall hardly have got to work.

Mr. Barnes: It is exceedingly doubtful unless you make some concession on the hours.

Colonel Dyer: I do not see there is any prospect of any concession on the hours.

Then after some desultory discussion,—

Mr. Sellicks: What I gather is that you have fully made up your minds, and I do not feel disposed to discuss the question any further; but I think we ought to understand where we are. For instance, our terms of reference from the Board of Trade were that we were to do so and so, we have not arrived at an agreement, although we have agreed as far as we have gone, but now you have given us a blank refusal on the hours question, and we ought to know our position now. The terms were laid down by the Board of Trade, and then a resumption of work was to take place. Now, we had better talk about that if we are not coming to an agreement. It seems to me that we are a long way off it by the attitude you have adopted—such an uncompromising one that I did not expect it. I expected that you would be a little more reasonable. What is our real position when we leave here to-night?

Colonel Dyer: What is your position? Are you prepared to settle or not with the men?

Mr. Sellicks: In the absence of any advance from your side on the question of hours, we certainly would not undertake to order the men back to work without consulting them. Now, then, in the event

of the men accepting those terms, what is your idea about the resumption of work?

Colonel Dyer: I think—I am speaking entirely for my own opinion—I should say that they should resume work at once. I should like to consult my colleagues before I actually say so, but that is my opinion, and I cannot conceive why we go on quarrelling in this way.

Mr. Sellicks: Does that mean part of the men, or all the men?

Colonel Dyer: All the men we can find employment for, and as quickly as they can be found employment for. In the first three or four weeks they would all be absorbed, because there is a large amount of work put aside which could be caught hold of, and there is a large amount of work which can be got provided the dispute was at an end.

And later:—

Mr. Sellicks: We have asked you for the 48 hours, and your reply is "no reduction," and I think you have not done yourselves justice in this matter. I suggest that we compromise the matter. Give us 51 all round. It is only a reduction on a part of the men covered by your federation, and it only means three hours in London—not a great deal. You have given rises of wages equal to it when trade has been good, and if you will give us that, the men will return to work on Monday.

Colonel Dyer: Yes, a rise of wages. I did not think there would be very much difficulty before this dispute, but when you come to hours it is a thing altering the whole condition of labour, and you are not only asking for the wages you get yourselves, but asking us to pay out a large sum of money for which we get no return whatever. Wages have been easily adjusted by consultation, but when you come to the question of hours we are taking a leap in the dark of which we know nothing, and we don't like taking that leap.

Mr. Sellicks: Our proposal to the employers is that they should give us the 51 hours, and I say on my own responsibility—and if our fellows don't agree there shall be a row—that they will start work on Monday morning."

After an adjournment Colonel Dyer stated that after every consideration of the proposal the idea of shortening hours could not be entertained.

"It is evident," the report adds, "that the only reason for the representatives of the allied trade unions not proclaiming the end of the strike was their failure to obtain a reduction in the working week. They had as trade unionists accepted all the conditions of working which have been so falsely described as antagonistic to trade unionism."

Dec. 20th.—A circular, signed by the 14 representatives of the men at the conference, was issued to the affiliated societies affected by the dispute in the engineering trade. The document refers to the proposed object of the dispute thus: "We much regret that on the hours question we failed to induce the employers to recede from their former position, although the discussion was fuller and of a more friendly character than on the last occasion. On the whole the proposals as set out do to some extent risk your interests, but your delegates ventured to offer on your behalf a return to work on

the basis of a 51 hours' week, which, however, the employers declined. We desire, as we are sure all concerned do, a return to work and some degree of certainty of lasting peace and return of goodwill. We therefore ask you to record your votes as shown in accompanying ballot paper, returnable to general office not later than the 27th inst."

The ballot paper was arranged thus:

ALLIED TRADES' CONFERENCE.

"Those in favour or against acceptance of employers terms as submitted herewith:—

In favour of employers terms

Against

Please put X opposite 'in favour' or 'against' as you may desire to vote. Also vote for or against endorsement of offer made by men's delegates at Conference. The offer made was provisional acceptance of employers terms and a return to work on the basis of a 51 hour week throughout the federated area:—

For offer of 51 hours

Against"

Dec. 23rd.—The following telegram was made public:
"To Messrs. Sellicks and Barnes, London.

Dear Sirs,—We observe it widely reported in the Press that in the ballot now in process a vote is being asked on a 51 hours' week. We disclaim the slightest intention to interfere with the affairs of the allied unions, but we are desired by our Committee, in case of misapprehension, to send you the present communication. As stated at the recent Conference, the employers cannot recede from the position distinctly intimated at the commencement of the dispute—that no reductions of hours can be made, and that, before any settlement can take place, the present demand must be dropped. The effort made by the allied unions to compromise on the basis of a 51 hours' week having been declined, the employers regret that the question of 51 hours should have been introduced into the vote, owing to the danger of its confusing the issue. The subject of this communication being of important general interest, we are giving it to the Press.

Yours faithfully,

THOMAS BIGGART and JAMES ROBINSON, Secretaries."

Dec. 30th.—The result of the ballot was communicated to the Employers' Federation as follows:

1. Votes in favour of or against acceptance of employers' terms:

For, 1,041; against, 54,933.

2. Votes for or against endorsement of provisional acceptance of employers' terms, and return to work on the basis of a 51 hours' week throughout the federated area:

For, 8,515; against, 42,080."

Dec. 31st.—In reply a telegram was despatched by the Federated Employers to Messrs. Sellicks and Barnes worded thus:

"We have to acknowledge receipt of your communication conveying result of ballot. The truce is therefore at an end."

Later a statement was issued by the employers reiterating their decision to stand firm by their refusal to reduce hours of labour.

1898. *Jan. 1st.*—Congress of 198 trade unionists, claiming to represent 1,500,000 employed, was held at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London.

Jan. 6th.—The London Trades Council issued an appeal to all labour organisations for financial assistance in accordance with the resolutions of the Congress on the 1st inst.

Jan. 13th.—The London Joint Committee resolved:

"That we intimate to the Employers' Federation that the demand for an eight-hours day, or forty-eight hours week, be withdrawn.

That before such intimation is given the above resolution to be sent to the executive councils of the societies represented on the Joint Committee, for their approval or otherwise, the replies to reach the Joint Trades Committee, the Nelson Inn, Blackfriars, London, not later than the first post on Saturday, January 15th.

That the consideration of whatever steps are necessary for an organised return to work on the part of our members stand adjourned until Saturday."

Jan. 15th.—The following notice was sent to the Employers' Federation and to the three London firms struck:

"Allied Trades Joint Committee. Lord Nelson, Blackfriars:—I am instructed to inform you that the demand made by the above committee for an eight-hours working day, or 48-hours week, on July 3rd, 1897, has now been withdrawn.—DAVID BROWN, secretary."

Jan. 19th.—The Employers' Federation, in acknowledging the notification of the withdrawal of the demand for a 48-hours week, required "the acceptance of the conditions of management mutually adjusted at the recent Westminster conference," and contingent on this acceptance agreed to restart a portion of the men and to fill up vacancies as rapidly as possible.

Jan. 21st.—The A.S.E. issued a letter to its members recommending them to vote for the terms submitted by the employers.

Jan. 28th.—The final agreement as to conditions of management was ratified by 28,588 votes to 13,727, and signed as follows:

"On behalf of the Federated Engineering and Shipbuilding Employers,

HENRY C. S. DYER, President.

THOMAS BIGGART } Secretaries.

JAMES ROBINSON }

On behalf of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers,

GEO. N. BARNES.

JOSEPH HOOSON.

On behalf of the London Joint Committee,

ALBERT BIGBY, who signs for
United Society of Smiths and Hammermen,
London and Provincial Society of Coppersmiths,
London United Society of Drillers,
London United Society of Brass Finishers,
London and Provincial Society of Hammermen,
Amalgamated Society of Tool Makers, Scientific
Instrument Makers,
Marine and General Engineers' Society."

The only reference to hours of labour contained in the terms thus signed is the overtime clause, which is as follows:

3.—OVERTIME.

"When overtime is necessary the Federated Employers recommend the following as a basis and guide:—

That no man shall be required to work more than 40 hours' overtime in any four weeks after full shop hours have been worked, allowance being made for time lost through sickness or absence with leave.

In the following cases overtime is not to be restricted, viz.:—

Breakdowns in plant.

General repairs, including ships.

Repair or replace work, whether for the employer or his customers.

Trial trips.

It is mutually agreed that in cases of urgency and emergency restrictions shall not apply.

This basis is to apply only to members of the Trade Unions who are represented at this Conference.

All other existing restrictions as regards overtime are to be removed.

It is understood that, if mutually satisfactory to the Local Association of Employers and the workmen concerned, existing practices regarding overtime may be continued.

NOTE.—These overtime conditions are precisely the conditions now in operation in various places, though in many Federated Workshops no limitation whatever exists at the present time. In many cases this will be the first attempt to regulate or prevent excess of overtime. This will be the first attempt to regulate or prevent excess of overtime."

Jan. 31st.—Work was resumed generally.

Feb. 3rd.—The following is the *Times* summary of this date of the failure of the attempt to secure an eight-hours day by Trade Unions' compulsion:

"Much irreparable loss has been incurred. Trade has gone elsewhere with no probability of returning. Delicate machinery has been injured by lying idle. Profits and wages to the amount of some millions have been lost. Many workmen who for years subscribed to the union in the belief that they would in old age or when out of employment receive a pension or allowance are now with good reason alarmed as to their future. The union itself must be exposed to a severe strain, for the men who are not employed will claim 'benefit' money, and the young members will not be punctual in their payments of subscriptions. Habits of idleness have been contracted by not a few who, before the strike, were industrious. We must not, however, be blind to the set-off, such as it is, to these evils. There is an end of certain delusions which have flourished for years in every workshop in the country. We shall hear for some time less talk about unions being able to enforce their will whenever they care to put forth their full strength. There will not be the constant interference with internal arrangements, which had reached a well-nigh intolerable pass; and employers will be what for some years they have scarcely been, masters in their own workshops. The struggle has been a lesson to the aggressive unionists. The union is not 'smashed,' but

its leaders are much more reasonable. They will talk good sense for some time to come."

4. SOME OF THE TRADE UNIONS' REASONS FOR RAISING THE DEMAND.

"A trial of strength with this [the Employers'] Federation was inevitable, and the present is as favourable an opportunity as was likely to be presented to us. Trade is brisk, the weather good, and the issue a popular one."—(Report of the A.S.E., July, 1897).

"The men must remember that this eight-hours question is in its essence a wage question, and not an hours question at all."—(Mr. John Burns, M.P., the same month).

At a meeting of engineers held in Manchester, July 28, 1897, Mr. Burns also said: "It was not for them to trouble about trade; that was the masters' business." His epigram that "trade follows the agitator" is already a quite historic saying. This recalls what Mr. Barnes said about the same time: "This country cannot always be the workshop of the world, neither is it desirable that it should be so." And Mr. Mann at a mass meeting in Leeds, on July 26th, said: "We shall not remain contented for ever with an eight-hours day. Democracy is now shaping itself not merely to get an eight-hours day—that is by the way—but in order to get their feet effectively planted for something else."

"We have so far out-generaled Col. Dyer as to have averted the fight upon an unpopular issue, and to have shunted it on to a question upon which we ought to get, and I believe will get, the support of our fellow-workmen."—(Mr. G. N. Barnes in a letter dated Aug. 2nd, 1897, to a Dundee newspaper.)

From the history given above it is clear that the dispute was not really to obtain reduced hours, in spite of the A.S.E. earlier manifestoes. Its real intentions and issues are beside the present question, and cannot be now touched upon. When the *Times* agrees with *Reynolds'* the fact is beyond doubt. On July 17th, 1897, the former said: "Consequently all the pretty and pathetic things we hear about the workman wanting more time with his family, or more leisure for self-improvement, are quite beside the question. The eight-hours day can be argued on its merits when it is brought forward fairly and squarely. There is no eight-hours movement in question just now, but merely an attempt to get higher wages by raising a false issue."

The latter said, on January 9th, 1898: "Let it be clearly understood that, although all along this has been called a fight for an eight-hours day, it is, in reality, nothing of the kind. It is simply a struggle for higher wages—namely, that overtime shall begin to count after eight hours have been worked. This will be no benefit to the unemployed, nor, indeed, does it involve any great principle. We should like to see all overtime worked by supernumerary men, on the principle of double shifts. Eight hours is long enough to labour in the more arduous manual trades. The engineers' contest would have been much more ardently supported had it been actually, and not merely nominally, a fight for a working day of eight hours, or forty-eight hours a week, with no overtime."

5. SOME OF THE EMPLOYERS' REASONS FOR REFUSING THE DEMAND.

"And now, why should that demand be resisted? Is eight hours not as reasonable and workable a day in engineering as it has (reputedly) been found in some other trades? The answer is, No!—and it is emphasized by the voices of upwards of two hundred employers all over the kingdom. These gentlemen know their business. They are among the most extensive and most experienced employers of labour in the world. They have an enormous aggregate capital invested in engineering establishments, and very many of them are also largely interested in other industries so closely connected with engineering that operations in them must soon be suspended if the strike of engineers is prolonged. Is it likely that these gentlemen would face such a loss as a strike implies if they could avoid it by what foolish commentators call a small concession? The demand for eight hours is accompanied by the condition that there shall be no reduction in pay to compensate for the reduction in labour. That means that labour in the future is to cost one-ninth more (six hours per week) than it is costing at present. Put in that way, the enormity of the demand begins to be seen—but only partially seen. For instance, the casual observer may say: 'Well, if you cannot give the eight hours *without* reduction, why not offer it *with* proportionate reduction of pay?' The reply from the employers' side to this is emphatic and conclusive, but the general public has not yet heard it. It is this, *that no proportionate or possible reduction in the wages of the men would compensate for the loss of the producing power of the machinery employed.* The loss of one-ninth of the output of a machine per day amounts to vastly more than the increase of one-ninth in wages. It amounts to so enormous a sum that it cannot be paid out of the industry. Well-established and wealthy engineer employers, who have gone carefully into the matter, and who (like most engineer employers) are always interested in the welfare of their men and willing to meet them in every reasonable way, frankly admit that the expenses and reduced output of an eight-hours day will simply wipe them out of the industrial field.

It would place them in a condition in which it would be absolutely impossible to compete with Belgian, French, and German makers. These foreigners employ precisely the same tools as British employers do, but they run a lathe or drilling machine or other tools for 60 hours per week, which the trade unions want our employers to run for only 48 hours per week. The difference of the locality makes no difference in the quality of the work done by machines of this sort. It is not a question of individual skill or capacity, but of mechanical power. It is said, no doubt, that an active, skilful operative can turn out as much work in eight hours as in nine—if he likes. But the same cannot be said of a machine. It has its maximum capacity, and it is, or should be, already running at that. You cannot make it run any faster in eight hours than in nine, but you will simply do one hour's less work with it. And no amount of argument or sophistry can alter that fact. It is so hard and substantial that the engineer employers have rooted themselves upon it.

As to the theory that men will do as much in eight hours as they *now do in nine*, reference may be made to the experiences of em-

ployers after the adoption of the nine-hours system. Some three or four years ago, Mr. Jeans, of the Iron Trades' Association, took a canvass of employers on the question. 'When the nine-hours system came into operation years ago, did you find that the men worked proportionately harder, so as to produce about as much with shorter as with longer hours?' And of fifty replies to this question *not one* was in the affirmative; indeed, some replies were to the effect that less work is done per hour now than under the ten-hours system.

At the time of the Mather and Platt experiment at Salford (which proved nothing, as it was conducted under the auspices of the A.S.E. with a distinct object), one of the large engineering firms made a calculation of the cost of adopting the eight-hours day. It was found to mean in this particular work a loss in wages of £450 per week, and a loss in time, on plant, and in working charges of £750 per week. The reduction in this single works then would have meant a loss of £1,200 per week. This was in 1894, and much new machinery has been introduced since, so that the loss now would be even greater. On this basis, however, we estimate that the concession of the eight-hours day without reduction in pay in the engineering trade of the United Kingdom would involve to the employers *a loss of not less than six millions sterling per annum*. How does that strike your sentimental economist and your emotional philosopher? Can a loss of six millions per annum be justified in order to allow a hundred thousand men an additional hour of idleness per day?"—(*Fairplay*, July 15, 1897.)

"The men's statement that extra output per hour would be the result of shorter hours is an entire fallacy, as we all know from our past experience. However much theorists may attempt to prove to the contrary, data taken from our prime cost books clearly show that, on jobs which have not been re-organised, and on which the manual labour remains the same, the productive results of the men have, for some years past, been actually less than they were formerly—and we are sure your own experience will confirm this."—(Private Statement issued to employers in July, 1897.)

This latter Statement was accompanied by a table showing rate of wages and percentage of increase since 1891. This table shows that for journeyman fitters and turners in the Manchester district the highest wages paid for 48 hours' actual work up to 1891 was £1 10s. 2½d.; up to 1896, £1 10s. 9½d.; up to 1897, £1 12s. 7d.; viz., at the rates of 34s. per 54 hours, 34s. per 53 hours, and 36s. per 53 hours respectively. A concession of the demand of 36s. for 48 hours would mean an increase of 19¼ per cent., 17 per cent., and 10½ per cent. respectively over these preceding rates. As regards overtime it would mean a corresponding high increase. The following note was appended to the table:

"The increase of 2s. which was given last year to all classes of labour alike, irrespective of the rates of wages then paid, would considerably increase the above percentages on the lower paid labour, such as drillers, borers, etc. It is not too much to state that, taking the average in the ordinary shop of all the men and trades employed, a rise of 25 per cent. all round would be a moderate estimate of the increase in wages that would have been granted in the last 6 years, if the present demand were conceded.

"As regards the overtime, it must be noted that it has been calculated on the basis of 2 hours being worked for each of the 5 days, a total of 10 hours in the week, whereas, in some shops the men do not work overtime more than 4 days in the week, as they object to it on Monday. If the list were revised so that only 8 hours were calculated at 'time and quarter' the last 2 hours would have to be 'time and half,' still further raising the percentage of increase.

"How do these figures compare with the bare statement put forward by the men's representatives 'that they have only had a 2s. rise in 25 years'?"

Col. Dyer, in an article in *Cassier's* of November, 1897, wrote: "Whatever the leaders may say to the contrary, the men will work long hours if they can, and this desire for shorter hours of labour only gives to the workmen additional reasons for doing so."

Mr. Benjamin Taylor, F.R.G.S., in the same issue wrote:

"The success of the eight-hours day system as a permanent method of working has never been demonstrated. The success of experiments has been lavishly enough advertised, but these experiments have probably been made under the special favour of the A.S.E., with selected men and a common understanding to bring out the best results. Their success, if any, is due to special nursing. Such conditions cannot be permanent nor applicable to all shops. On the other hand, in very many cases in which the eight-hours system has been adopted experimentally, it has been abandoned as impracticable, expensive, and in various ways objectionable. London firms who conceded under pressure have quickly abandoned the eight-hours day. . . . And, although our output was not appreciably reduced after the adoption of nine hours, our foreign competitors at once increased their hold on our foreign markets much more rapidly than we did. In the period 1870-74, for instance, when nine hours came into force, we increased our exports by only 65 per cent. in value (though this was the time of highly inflated prices), while Belgium increased hers by 120 per cent. In the succeeding five years we actually decreased about 1 per cent., while Belgium made a further gain of 30 per cent. At the present time our most formidable competitors in engineering are the United States (where the working week is 58 to 60 hours); Germany (where the working week is 60 to 64 hours); and Belgium (where the working week is 60 to 66 hours)."

Sir Benjamin C. Browne wrote to the Press on Aug. 12th, 1897, contradicting the impression that the results of the dispute of 1871 to reduce the hours from 59 to 54 were altogether favourable. He asserts that, as a matter of fact, the effect was to crush a number of small firms out of existence. Of the eight Newcastle employers and four Gateshead employers who fought the battle of the 59 hours week only five are still left in business, and the remainder have succumbed to the pressure of increased expenses and keener competition. In Sir Benjamin's opinion the reduction of hours would have been still more disastrous but for the exceptional events which created a demand for engineering work, such as the opening of the Suez Canal and the destruction caused by the Franco-Prussian war. Even with these mitigating circumstances, a crash came a few years later which ruined

many employers and threw numbers of workmen out of a place. No such counteracting benefits are now available; on the contrary, vigorous foreign competition has to be encountered; and Sir Benjamin's prediction is that, if the eight-hours day is carried, a large body of men will no longer be able to find employment, or wages must be reduced.

"It certainly seems to me that both theory and experience go to show that to grant the eight hours would alienate much trade, annihilate still more, and before long throw numbers of men out of work. If only given in London it would be a severe blow to all constructive engineering in that city. Of course, the repair shops, of whom many have conceded it, are much longer in feeling the ill effects, but all experience shows that a concession like that given in one centre spreads very rapidly all over the country.

The object of the Federation in resisting the eight hours was not to break the union, but to save the trade. In the early part of this year, the A.S.E. made five demands on us—advances of wages (which we granted), higher lodging allowances, higher pay for trial trips, and restriction of overtime, on all of which we made offers that they considered satisfactory. The fifth demand was the machine question, on which we could not agree; but while this was unsettled the demand for eight hours was made in London, and the employers were given very little time to decide what answer to give."—(Letter from Sir Benjamin C. Browne, published in the *Times* of August 26th, 1897.)

6. WHY SOME FIRMS GRANTED THE DEMAND.

"The firms who have conceded the eight-hours day in London are mostly repair shops, or those in which the value of the engineering work is small as compared to the total output, whilst there are instances in which the financial position of the firm is not such as to enable a fight to be carried out."—(Letter from Mr. G. R. Dunell in the *Times* of 12th July, 1897.)

"There is, for instance, an eight-hours day in the Government yard at Woolwich, established by a Ministry impressed with the sanctity of the working man as an elector; but the Woolwich yard has not to face foreign competition; what labour it lacks on the short day it makes up for by expensive overtime; there is nobody to check the costs; the nation does not expect a profit; and whatever the piper has to be paid the taxpayer is always there to pay it. Then there is also the Thames Iron Works, where the eight-hours day has been in force for two or three years; but it is notorious that the Thames Iron Works are run on philanthropic rather than on economic principles, that they do not pay any dividends, and that they have even to ask for supplementary votes to make up losses incurred on Government contracts."—(*Airplay*, July 15th, 1897.)

7. WHY SO MANY FIRMS REVERTED TO LONGER HOURS.

Messrs. Hodgson and Stead, Egerton Iron Works, Salford, in 1895 completed a year's experiment of the 48 hours system. "The results," they say, "were fairly satisfactory, though not such as we

confidently expected. However, we decided to continue the experiment another twelve months, and still more carefully watch its working. During this period we found our manufacturing department not yielding anything like the percentage of the first year; therefore, we came to the conclusion that, in our case, the advantages claimed for the 48 hours system were inoperative, and on July 9th, 1896, we returned to the 53 hours week."—(Letter from the firm to the Employers' Federation, July, 1897.)

Messrs. J. Richmond and Co., of London, on September 22nd, 1897, on reversion to a 54 hours week, said:

"We did not enter upon this step without mature and careful consideration, but we have, during the last three months, been watching most closely the effect of the eight-hours day in our shops and on the cost of production, and we are sorry to say that we could not do otherwise than form a decided opinion of the fact that, instead of the men doing more work per hour (we do not say more in eight hours than nine, but work per hour) they are doing less, and our books amply show this, as a great deal of our work is of a special description and such as we are constantly reproducing. It is consequently an easy matter to draw comparisons, and our books show us that the work has cost far and away more than the difference in wages paid between a 48 and a 54 hours week. Whether the fact of getting less work out of the men is due to some extent to the excitement which prevails, with the result that while at work they are more or less discontented, we do not know, but certainly the same vexatious, and very often obnoxious, conditions still existed, till at last we found it practically impossible to carry on our business under such conditions, and we concluded (if absolutely necessary) it would be better for us for the time being and until matters were on a more settled basis to close our works altogether, or, at any rate, to do the best we could with any chance assistance we could get hold of from non-unionist men. If absolute figures or extracts from our cost books would be of any service to you we should be glad to furnish such, or show you or representatives of the Masters' Federation the actual entries and memoranda of the work carried on in our works during the last three months."

Mr. A. Normandy, of Victoria Dock Road, London, E., who granted the demand, but on October 15th, 1897, was compelled to revert to the old system, in reply to a letter from his unionist workmen appealing against the reversion, epitomised the position thus:

"1. Present eight-hours movement really amounts to asking masters and their customers to pay nine men full wages for doing eight men's work.

2. Masters look on this as the last straw, forcing them to combine. They have, for many years, put up with a good deal from their men.

3. You say our notice that employment would only be given on the nine-hours per day basis leaves our old servants no alternative but to stand by their societies, and you explain the hardship thereof.

4. I regret this as much as you do; but whose fault is it? You admit you are throwing up good employment because you dare not disobey your society. Now this is a form of slavery.

5. You have a perfect right to combine, to get as much as you can reasonably expect, and to subscribe to a strike fund, but, for your own protection, this fund should be administered by leaders elected, or re-elected, every year by all the men.

6. You are wise to subscribe to a fund for providing against sickness, old age, and depression of trade, but to give your leaders power to stop all this if you do not obey their orders is most unwise. See what a hold it gives them over you, you are no longer free men.

7. No doubt your leaders act for the best, as they think; but we are all liable to error, and the masters think your leaders' policy makes it more and more difficult to secure orders, and consequently work for the men, and that, sooner or later, it will be ruinous for the men and for the prosperity of the country.

8. Can you not see that by continually forcing up wages, reducing hours of work, and prohibiting men doing as much as they could easily do, eventually makes everything you buy dearer, unless it is of foreign manufacture, and then the foreigner gets wages which should have come to you?

9. The system of terrorizing men from working on terms you do not like, but which suits them, is cowardly and unjust.

10. As to your remarks about our having agreed to give same wages for eight hours as we did for nine hours, our employees, at a most awkward time, told us their societies would order them out on strike unless we gave way, and finding other employers had one by one been thus attacked and had given way we had to do the same.

11. Also shortly before and after we had given way as to eight hours, and also at a most awkward time, a rise in wages was asked for by some departments; we demurred, as we were paying best London wages, but we were told wages were higher in our district, and that societies had ordered the men to come out on strike if we did not give way, so we had to do so.

12. I regret to add that although many of our men have served us well for many years others have wasted time, some to a disgraceful extent, knowing how difficult it then was to replace them, and this is getting worse and worse instead of better.

13. The men are greatly mistaken in thinking foreigners cannot turn out good work. I see plenty of it in my travels, and they work longer hours for less wages; but we could beat them if our men were only reasonable, but, unfortunately, they are misled.

14. Lastly, the masters have been forced into combination by the societies having for many years acted up to their mistaken notions as to what is best for the men. These societies do not appreciate the difficulties, anxieties, and expenses masters have to contend with, and masters have a right to their own opinions as well as the men, and men should not abuse them for acting thereon.

Yours faithfully, A. NORMANDY.

P.S.—The few who still give the eight hours may be influenced by special circumstances, possibly by being extra busy as a result of other masters' misfortunes."

The cases of other typical engineering firms, such as Messrs. Caird and Rayner, have already been referred to in the foregoing text.

8. SOME PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS.

This, then, is a short diary of some of the events of the dispute, so far as they relate to the eight-hours day. From the selection of facts given, the attitude of trade unionists and of employers will be readily appreciated. The above extracts from documents and statements of proceedings, while professing to give the main facts, are only intended to be typical, and by no means exhaustive. It has been necessary, therefore, to omit all details of the local extension of the dispute; of the numerous manifestoes in which appeals were made for financial aid; of the opinions and actions of many important persons and firms interested, as well as of members of both Houses of Parliament, the clergy, professors of political economy, and representative bodies sympathizing with one side or the other. We have also reserved for a future occasion the discussion of the effects of this struggle upon trade, upon the movement towards extended combination—both on the part of employers and of employed—upon the almost moribund ideal called “socialism,” and upon the public. The serious factors of competition and output have been strenuously maintained by the employers’ statements, and their genuine import is widely recognised. On the other hand, the men’s case for reduced hours was so weak that, from the first, it was quite untenable. On this count a simple statement of what each side has said is of itself probably more eloquent than a rhetorical dissertation. It is clear, if only from the voting, that the question of reduced hours was merely an incident in a crisis of relationship between the engineering employers and the irresponsible agitators who had secured power over the workmen. Thus, on the collapse of the strike, the *Daily News* acknowledged “absolute victory for the employers on the hours question”; the *Daily Chronicle* was too depressed to produce even a leading article; and the majority of the press, which originally supported the men’s demands, deliberately turned round and said the whole thing was a regrettable mistake. Indeed, the gradual shifting of contemporary criticism, as the dispute progressed, away from the hours question to the latest fashion in the economic world—viz., writing up the method of fixing wages, etc., now termed “collective bargaining” (which, however, is by no means new, but, as a method, has always been

a part of the wages system), affords a deeply-interesting study of how modern press criticism is influenced.

In a treatise dealing with this particular dispute only, and the studies to be drawn from it, we should naturally include much interesting and quite relevant matter—*e.g.*, the history of the short hours movement; the other great industrial disputes on the question of hours of labour, with their many-branching issues; a comparison of the position in England with legislative and voluntary action abroad; and the infringing questions of competition—native and foreign—overtime, demarcation of work, interference of trade unions in working conditions, piece-work *v.* time-work, and the influence of labour-saving machinery, and so on. On most of these points a general endeavour has here been made to bring out the leading features; but, as we have only attempted a general summary, a special chapter has not been devoted to each particular situation. The eight-hours question in the engineering industries, with great attention paid to the practical side of the subject, is well depicted, it may be mentioned, by Mr. J. Stephen Jeans in his recently-issued pamphlet, "Labour Problems of To-day."

The chief question we are here concerned with is that of legislative enactment, and, touching this, the tardy interference in this dispute by the Board of Trade, under the auspices of the Conciliation Act, affords a valuable object-lesson. It is useless to look to the Government for forced help in industrial crises. The difficulties arise in natural course, and must solve themselves in natural sequence. The Board of Trade, the administrator of labour legislation as regards industrial concerns, in dealing with this dispute, admittedly failed, not only in its negotiations which were resented by the employers, repudiated by the employed, and despised by the public, but also in its lesser duties—in supplying authoritative impartial information, for instance. That the promoters of Labour legislation are aware of its failure is the strongest possible argument against an extension of such legislation. And that such is the case is the clearest lesson to be learnt from this dispute.

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